



# PERSONAL FIREARM SAFETY

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BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE NAVAL SAFETY COMMAND

# Proper firearm safety can mean the difference between life and death.

This presentation discusses:

- Universal Rules of Firearm Safety
- Alcohol, Drugs and Firearms
- Safe Firearm Storage
- Educating Children on Firearm Safety
- Installation Firearms Policies
- Protecting Your Vision and Hearing
- Hotlines
- Other Resources

RMI mishap examples in this presentation offer limited factual information. Safety professionals with access to RMI can research the examples with one caution: while helpful for general background information for use by safety professionals, avoid going beyond factual information by releasing privileged safety information (PSI) or personally identifiable information (PII). Please contact NAVSAFECOM with any questions

# Universal Rules of Firearm Safety

Proper gun handling helps keep everyone safe. If your service member or another loved one owns a gun, ask them about the safety measures they take when using it.



# Remember: "Treat, Never, Keep, Keep"



## **TREAT**

every weapon as if it were loaded



## **NEVER**

point a weapon at anything you do not intend to shoot



## **KEEP**

your finger straight and off the trigger



## **KEEP**

the weapon on safe until you intend to fire

# Rule 1: Treat every weapon as if it were loaded

- Even if you are certain the weapon is empty, always treat it as a loaded gun.
- Don't do anything with an unloaded gun that wouldn't be safe with a loaded gun.
- Never accept another person's word that a firearm is unloaded; verify this for yourself.

*APR 2020 - RMI ID 10199566: Service member was fatally shot in the chest while roommate was disassembling a handgun sitting across the room.*

# Rule 2: Never point a weapon at anything you do not intend to shoot

- Always be aware of where the gun is pointed.
- Keep the weapon pointed in a direction that will safely stop any round fired.
- A “safe” direction is one where an accidental discharge will not cause injury or damage.

# Rule 3: Keep your finger straight and off the trigger until you want to fire

- Keep your index finger extended along the frame of the weapon until your sights are on your target and you want to fire.
- This prevents you from unintentionally firing because you stumbled, are startled or clutched something with your other hand.
- Only touch the trigger when you are absolutely certain you are ready to fire.

*MAR 2019 - RMI ID 10182530: Sailor was readjusting weapon in his hand when he squeezed the trigger, resulting in a gun shot wound to his left large toe.*

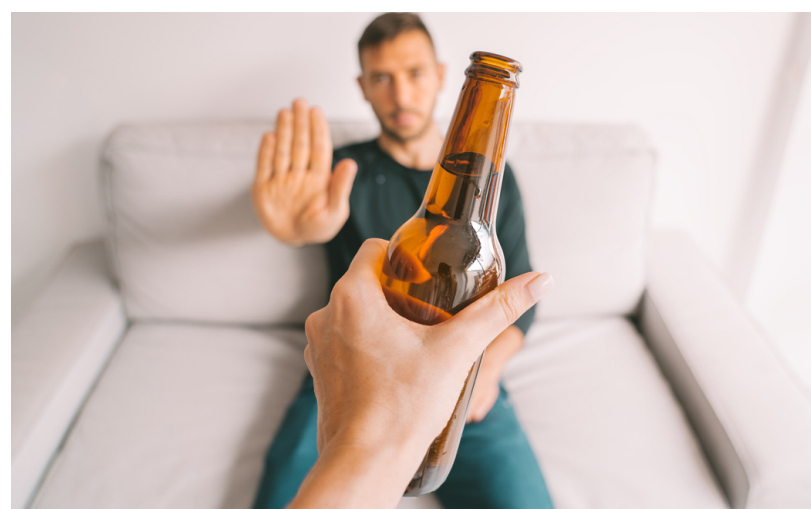
# Rule 4: Keep the weapon on safe until you intend to fire

- Don't put all your faith in the gun's safety; it could fail or disengage.
- Know how to safely open and close the action and safely remove ammunition from the gun or magazine.



# Alcohol, Drugs and Firearms

Any substance likely to impair normal mental or physical bodily functions must not be used before or while handling or shooting firearms. Never use a firearm if you are under the influence of:



**ALCOHOL**



**ILLEGAL DRUGS**



**PRESCRIPTION  
DRUGS**



# Safe Firearm Storage

Weapons are safest when unloaded, locked up and separated from ammunition.

# Firearm Storage Considerations Include:

- Keeping all guns and ammunition out of the reach of children, untrained adults and those who would use them improperly.
- Keeping the keys to gun safes/locks separate from household keys and out of the reach of unauthorized users.
- Storing firearms unloaded and with the safety on.
- Keeping firearms dry, cleaned and oiled while in storage.
- Storing guns and ammunition in a cool, dry place away from heat and fire.
- Regularly checking on firearms to confirm they have not been disturbed.

# Safe Firearm Storage

Safe storage options are effective in helping prevent suicides and protecting others from accidents in the home. The presence of unlocked guns in homes increases the risk of both unintentional gun injuries and intentional shootings.

Practice safe storage so others cannot readily access your firearm without your knowledge.

***Proper storage of firearms is the responsibility of all gun owners.***



# Free Gun Locks

Project ChildSafe is a nationwide program developed by the National Shooting Sports Foundation® to help ensure safe and responsible firearm ownership and storage.

If you would like a free Project ChildSafe Safety Kit, which includes a cable-style gun lock and safety instructions, visit [www.projectchildsafe.org/safety/get-a-safety-kit/](http://www.projectchildsafe.org/safety/get-a-safety-kit/) to find a distribution partner in your state. Be sure to contact the partner to verify that supplies are available.

Disclaimer: The resources provided are for information purposes only and does not imply endorsement of the company or its products. 13





# Educate Children on Firearm Safety

A child as young as three can pull a trigger. And when a toddler's thumb pushes against a trigger, the barrel is most likely pointed toward their face.

# Teach Children:

- If you find a gun, STOP!
- Don't touch it.
- Leave the area.
- Tell an adult.

Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws impose criminal liability on adults who negligently leave firearms accessible to children or otherwise allow children access to firearms.

Even if you store your weapons safely, you can't be sure other parents do as well. Just because you don't own a firearm doesn't mean your child will never encounter one.



# Installation Firearms Policies

Every installation has its own rules concerning the possession and transport of personal firearms and other weapons, and it's the owner's responsibility to know what they are.





**“Personal firearms shall not be possessed, used, introduced, transported or stored on board a Navy installation, to include a joint base where Navy is lead service, on-base bachelor quarters, on-base temporary lodging and on-base military housing (including on-base Public-Private Venture (PPV) housing), without prior written approval of installation commanding officers (ICO). Personal firearms overseas are governed by applicable Status of Forces Agreements and host nation laws.”**

Reference: OPNAVINST 5530.14E CH-3 Navy  
Physical Security and Law Enforcement  
Program , Para. 0306, Personal Firearm, Safety,  
Control and Accountability



# Protecting your Hearing and Vision

Shooting a firearm can cause immediate and permanent hearing loss and can damage your vision.

# Tips to Protect your Hearing

**Almost all firearms create noise that is over the 140-dB level, which can permanently damage hearing.**

- Always use some type of hearing protection any time you fire a gun.
- Always have disposable hearing protection devices (HPDs) handy.
- Double-protect your ears, like putting muffs over plugs, when shooting big-bore firearms.
- Choose smaller caliber firearms for target practice and hunting.
- Choose single-shot firearms instead of lever-action, pump or semi-automatic guns.
- Avoid shooting in groups or in reverberant environments.

People who do not wear hearing protection while shooting can suffer a severe hearing loss with as little as one shot, if the conditions are right.

# Eye Protection

Not only does shooting a firearm send the projectile(s) downrange, but it also discharges small particles from the projectile, burning gas and other residue. Also, a shell could rupture or the firearm could malfunction.

- When shooting, always wear suitable eye protection, such as shooting glasses with high-impact lenses, to protect your eyes.
- Wear eye protection whenever disassembling or cleaning a firearm.

***MAR 2023 - RMI ID 576663:** Service member was handling fully loaded magazine. Base plate detached from bottom of magazine allowing spring to uncoil, scratching the service member's eye.*

# Hotlines



The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the United States.

You can talk to someone by calling or texting the Lifeline at 988.

The Veterans/Military Crisis line offers confidential support to service members and veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide.

Call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, text 838255; or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat).

# Other Resources

## Naval Safety Command Website

<https://navalsafetycommand.navy.mil/>

## Our Firearm Safety Awareness Campaign

<https://navalsafetycommand.navy.mil/Stand-Down/Firearm-Safety/>

## Free Gun Locks

<https://projectchildsafe.org/safety/get-a-safety-kit/>

