Utah Gun Violence:
An issue of public health and safety

2023 Edition
Acknowledgments

Utah Gun Violence: An Issue of Public Health and Safety was inspired by Beth Joslin Roth at our affiliate organization, Safe Tennessee. She single-handedly collected national and state-specific gun violence data for Tennessee and compiled it, then generously let us use her formatting and national data. Without her inspiration and hard work, this book would not have been possible. Our first edition was published during the pandemic with amazing support from our intern at the time, Tommy Munroe. Our goal is to update this book every two years to keep abreast of current numbers and trends in gun violence.

For this edition we are especially grateful to our interns: Celeste Dorantes and Alex Farnum, to our volunteer, Suellen Riffkin, for graphics and formatting and to the board members of the Gun Violence Prevention Center of Utah who made suggestions, researched topics and painstakingly edited the many drafts. We have added some new content and hope that this will serve as a valuable resource for our state as we work together for a safer, healthier Utah.
Gun Violence Prevention Center (GVPC) of Utah – Who are we? What do we do?

Our Mission is to prevent the tragedy of gun violence through education and reasonable regulation of firearms.

Who we are: GVPC is the Utah state affiliate of States United to Prevent Gun Violence (SUPGV), the only national organization that supports independent state led gun violence prevention. GVPC is a non-partisan 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to providing education and information on the incidence of gun violence and the policies that effectively deter it. Our organization bases its policy positions on facts, statistics and measured data that is obtained from well-established research groups across the country. We work on the premise that it is possible for our society to take substantial action against the misuse of guns and still maintain the ability of citizens to own and possess firearms for legitimate recreational purposes and self-defense. GVPC is built on the philosophy that reasonable regulation of firearms can lead to significant reduction in the occurrence of gun violence.

Salt Lake City architect and artist, Ron Molen and his wife Norma founded the organization Utahns Against Gun Violence in 1994 after their son had been shot and killed at Indiana University. In 2001, they and a group of other concerned citizens who believed that we needed to and could do far more to protect society from the misuse of guns, formed the successor organization, Gun Violence Prevention Center of Utah (GVPC).

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SUPGV website: supgv.org
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What We Do:

- Educate Utahns about the merits of moderate gun-violence prevention measures.
- Research gun violence statistics and gun safety legislation and coordinate and network with other state’s GVP organizations in the States United Coalition.
- Testify and provide information in the Utah State Legislative Hearings.
- Sponsor and coordinate events to bring awareness of gun violence.
- Co-Host the Annual GVP Vigil (December).
- Provide a disarming service in conjunction with RawTools for individuals who no longer want or need a gun and do not want it to fall into unsafe hands.
- Collect and deliver written constituent comments to legislators.
- Speak and participate in community organization meetings and events.
- Provide information and GVP statistics to state and federal legislators.
- Coordinate support and advocacy with other organizations concerned about gun violence through the Utah Gun Safety Coalition.
- Write letters to the editor and editorial opinion pieces.
- Provide information and advocacy education to our supporters through social media and the GVPC webpage.
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Gun Violence: A Public Health Crisis

In 2020, 45,222 Americans died from gun violence: 123 people every single day. That same year 429 Utahns died from gun violence, one person every 20 hours.

The death toll from gun violence has exceeded automobile accidents both in Utah and nationwide. The Utah death rate by firearm has exceeded that of automobiles since 2010. In the U.S. the firearm death just exceeded the automobile death rate beginning in 2020. If an illness were killing our friends, family and neighbors at such an alarming rate, we would not hesitate to label it a crisis. And that’s what gun violence is. It’s a public health crisis.

Public health encompasses any threats to a person’s life and well-being that can be prevented, contained or tested. For many years, gun violence has been a leading cause of injury and death in our country, our state and our cities, but it can be prevented through focused interventions and reasonable laws.

Someone is killed with a gun every 20 hours in Utah

This approach is not new; the U.S. dramatically decreased injury and death rates from car accidents for adults, children and babies by engaging in robust study of the issue and ultimately making vehicles and car seats safer, passing laws requiring seat belts, lowering speed limits, passing DUI laws, requiring driving competency for licensure and enacting stronger laws that penalize irresponsible driving.

The public health approach to gun violence reduction does not replace nor is it at odds with law enforcement. Its focus is different: not deterrence but prevention by addressing the root causes of gun violence. Communities around the country and world integrate public health into public policy challenges. Our country and our state should do the same.

Source: WISQARS.CDC
A Comparison of Gun Violence to Other Public Health Issues

Public health is “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private communities and individuals.” — C.E.A. Winslow. In 2021, firearm deaths were the single leading cause of death for youths aged 1-19 in the U.S.

Age grouping of the causes of death reveals a startling pattern. Suicide and homicide rank in the top 4 causes of death among Americans aged 1-44. Suicide (see data on following pages) is most successfully carried out with a gun, and in 2021 76.7% of homicides were completed with a gun.

Causes of Death in United States 2011-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Unintentional Injury</th>
<th>Homicide</th>
<th>Suicide</th>
<th>Malignant Neoplasms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>Congenital Anomalies 4,043</td>
<td>1,451</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>35,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Short Gestation 3,141</td>
<td>Congenital Anomalies 382</td>
<td>Malignant Neoplasms 382</td>
<td>Suicide 631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>SIDS 1,389</td>
<td>Homicide 311</td>
<td>Congenital Anomalies 171</td>
<td>Malignant Neoplasms 410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>Unintentional Injury 16,924</td>
<td>Malignant Neoplasms 307</td>
<td>Homicide 169</td>
<td>Homicide 213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>Maternal Pregnancy Comp. 1,116</td>
<td>Heart Disease 112</td>
<td>Heart Disease 56</td>
<td>Congenital Anomalies 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>Placenta Cord Membranes 700</td>
<td>Influenza &amp; Pneumonia 84</td>
<td>Influenza &amp; Pneumonia 55</td>
<td>Heart Disease 111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>Bacterial Sepsis 542</td>
<td>Cerebrovascular 55</td>
<td>Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 54</td>
<td>Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>Malignant Neoplasms 34,589</td>
<td>Unintentional Injury 31,878</td>
<td>Malignant Neoplasms 34,589</td>
<td>Malignant Neoplasms 34,589</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As a nation, how have we responded to the public health issues presented in this data?

The NIH Estimates of Funding for Various Research and Disease Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research/Disease Area</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Research $Mil.</th>
<th>Research/Disease Area</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Research $Mil.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcoholism, Alcohol Use and Health</td>
<td>87,566</td>
<td>$568</td>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>10,753</td>
<td>$310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colo-Rectal Cancer</td>
<td>61,368</td>
<td>$335</td>
<td>Inflammatory Bowel Disease</td>
<td>3,646</td>
<td>$182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun Violence</td>
<td>45,222</td>
<td>$25*</td>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>$594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain Cancer</td>
<td>17,862</td>
<td>$415</td>
<td>Lyme Disease</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>$39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*First federal funding since the Dickey Amendment was passed in 1996 forbidding the use of Federal funding for the study of gun violence prevention.

Source: NIH.gov, WISQARS.CDC, Statista Research Department
On average, 120 Americans are killed with guns every day.

Over 45,000 Americans are killed by guns each year and 115,000 are shot and injured. Prior to 2020, the five-year average of Americans killed by guns each year, was over 38,000, and those injured were over 115,000.

From 2015 to 2019 the U.S. gun death rate remained steady at about 12 firearm deaths per 100,000 people, but rose sharply in 2020 to 13.6. This increase was largely driven by a 34% increase in gun homicides between 2019 and 2020.

Of the gun deaths in the U.S., suicide accounts for nearly 54%. Globally, the U.S. accounts for 35% of all firearm suicides.

In 2020, gun deaths reached their highest level in at least 40 years, with 45,222 deaths that year alone. This is followed by 2017, with 39,773 deaths occurring that year. Nonfatal firearm injuries are also on the rise.

National gun violence rates obscure the true levels of violence in certain places, particularly in underserved communities and communities of color.

Gun violence has an outsized economic impact on Americans beyond the devastating human toll it wreaks on society. Harvard Medical School researchers found that gun violence costs the U.S. $557 billion annually, or 2.6% of gross domestic product. Gun violence costs Utah $5.5 billion each year, of which $50.1 million is paid by taxpayers.

Sources: CDC-WISQARS, IHME 2, Giffords, GunPolicy.org
Utah Gun Violence

The growing gun violence in Utah is a strain on families – especially youth.

In 2018, The Salt Lake Tribune published an article titled, “Suicide rates in Utah currently outnumber homicides and access to guns is a driving factor, according to a new report.” The article stated: “‘But while a parent might purchase a gun with the hope or intent of protecting their children from an attacker,’ Utah Rep. Steve Eliason [R. Salt Lake] said, ‘it is considerably more likely that a child will use that weapon to take his or her own life.’”

Gun violence impacts Utah economically.

Gun violence costs Utah $5.5 billion each year, of which $50.1 million is paid by taxpayers. The costs come from healthcare costs, law enforcement and criminal justice expenses, costs to employers and lost income.

On average, one Utahn is killed with a gun every 20 hours.

Since 2009 the rate of gun death in Utah has been consistently at or above the U.S. average. In 2020, 429 Utahns were shot and killed, the most Utahns killed with guns in recent years. Between 2006 and 2020 the number of Utahns killed with guns almost doubled.

Sources: CDC-WISQARS Fatal Injury Reports, Kaiser Family Foundation, Giffords Law Center

84%
On average over the past 10 years, 84% of all firearm deaths in Utah are suicides.

#1
Firearms are the leading cause of death among children and teens in Utah.

39%
The rate of gun deaths in Utah increased 39 percent between 2006 and 2020.

42%
Of adult homicides in Utah are domestic violence related.
Utah Firearm Mortality
2006 – 2020

Firearm mortality includes homicides, fatal domestic shootings, police intervention, firearm suicides, unintentional shootings and shootings where the intent or motive is undetermined.

- Based on this data, on average one Utahn dies every 20 hours from gun violence.
- From 2009 to 2019, Utah has consistently had a higher fatal firearm mortality rate than that of the United States.
- Between 2006 and 2020, firearm mortality rates in Utah increased roughly 39%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Utah Deaths</th>
<th>Utah Rate</th>
<th>U.S. Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rates are per 100,000

Sources: CDC-WISQARS Fatal Injury Reports
Utah Firearm Mortalities by Local Health District

For the five-year period from 2016 - 2020, eight out of thirteen Local Health Districts in Utah, had firearm mortality rates above the national average (the national average was 12.4). Four of those, mostly in outlying areas of the state, had rates well above the national average (from 50-90% higher). Reporting from some rural areas is inconsistent, suggesting that the numbers may actually be even higher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Health District</th>
<th>Counties</th>
<th>Total Firearm deaths 2016-2020</th>
<th>Average yearly population 2016-2020</th>
<th>Rate per 100,000 over 5 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bear River</td>
<td>Box Elder*, Cache, Rich**</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>183,704</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Utah</td>
<td>Juab, Millard, Sanpete, Sevier*, Piute**, Wayne**</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>80,628</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>350,761</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake</td>
<td>Salt Lake</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>1,146,215</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Juan</td>
<td>San Juan</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15,295</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Utah</td>
<td>Carbon, Emery*, Grand</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40,198</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Utah</td>
<td>Beaver, Iron, Garfield*, Kane, Washington</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>244,527</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit</td>
<td>Summit</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>41,680</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tooele</td>
<td>Tooele</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>69,740</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricounty</td>
<td>Duchesne*, Uintah, Daggett**</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>56,698</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>621,506</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasatch</td>
<td>Wasatch</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33,053</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weber-Morgan</td>
<td>Weber*, Morgan</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>267,234</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>All Counties</td>
<td>1,994</td>
<td>3,151,239</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>All States; All Counties</td>
<td>203,100</td>
<td>326,569,232</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Highest rate for this Local Health District.

**County does not consistently report numbers.
Rates in red are higher than the national rate.

Source: health.ut.gov
Gun Ownership in Utah

Roughly 32% of American adults own a gun. Another 30% say they might own a gun in the future, and the other third could not imagine ever having one.

In 2020, the RAND Corporation published a long-term study from 2007 to 2016 of gun ownership in all 50 states. They combined survey-based estimates with other data indicative of gun ownership – shooting death records, gun-related magazine subscriptions, background check submissions, etc. – to determine the percentage of adults in each state living in a household with at least one gun.

According to the RAND study, Utah ranked 23rd in the nation for gun ownership with 47% of adults sharing their homes with guns. High gun ownership and weak gun laws have been credited with contributing to Utah’s high suicide and domestic violence (DV) homicide rates. In 2021 Utah’s gun laws were downgraded to an F by Giffords Law Center, because of the passage of Permitless Carry and a more permissive Stand Your Ground law.

Here is a comparison of Utah to states with higher gun ownership and weaker laws (Alaska), lower gun ownership and stronger laws (New Jersey) and similar gun ownership, but stronger laws (Minnesota).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percent Adults In Home With Guns</th>
<th>Giffords Gun Law Grade</th>
<th>2020 Gun Suicide Rate (Per 100,000)</th>
<th>2020 Domestic Violence Homicide Rate (Per 100,000)</th>
<th>2020 Gun Death Rate (Per 100,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska (AK)</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental health record reporting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah (UT)</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic violence gun laws, state database, no default proceed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota (MN)</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assault weapons restrictions, domestic violence &amp; child access prevention laws, waiting period, disarming procedure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey (NJ)</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Universal background check, crisis intervention orders, domestic violence gun laws, gun owner licensing, assault weapon restrictions, large capacity magazine ban, child access prevention laws, community violence intervention funding, strong concealed carry laws, ghost gun ban, certain open carry regulations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Average</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: RAND Corporation, Giffords Law Center, Violence Policy Center, Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF)
Permitless Carry: Utah’s Perfect Storm

In 2021 the Utah Legislature removed the permitting requirement for carrying a concealed firearm, which eliminated the required training and background checks. This represents a step back for public safety and responsible gun ownership. Now anyone over 18 in Utah can buy a gun and without any knowledge of state laws or proficiency at handling a gun, can carry the loaded and concealed gun in public.

Representatives who sponsored the permitless-carry bill assured the public that people would continue to attend the firearm training classes. They did not. Classes dried up: classes that had included firearm familiarity, state laws, justifiable use of force, suicide prevention, safe loading, unloading, storage and handling and a point-of-contact background check with fingerprints.

In addition, permitless carry denies law enforcement a valuable resource that helped keep guns out of dangerous hands. In 2019 2,654 concealed-carry applications or permits in Utah were denied, revoked or suspended. In 2020 the number denied, revoked or suspended was 4,293 – 62% more than 2019. The number of people who were not entitled to a concealed-carry permit was on the rise, but now there is no means to stop concealed-carry by persons who may be a threat to public safety.

Proponents of the law argued that the four-hour training was inadequate. If that were the case, perhaps improving the training should have been proposed rather than ending it. For safety reasons, law enforcement agencies recommend live-fire training as part of a thorough permitting process. Untrained gun owners pose danger to themselves and their community. Requiring safety discussions on the role of firearms in domestic violence and stolen guns in crime could lead to a more safety-conscious gun-owning population.

Removing the permit requirement for conceal carry of firearms passed in Utah during the pandemic, February 2021, when a record number of guns were sold - many to first-time gun owners.

The Perfect Storm:
First-time gun owners + No training or experience + Careless storage of firearms
= Easy access to stolen weapons by criminals

The Result: Utah’s homicide rate, which historically has been low, soared. This is exactly what other states with Permitless Carry have encountered.

Sources: GVPedia, John Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research
### Background Check Loopholes

In the absence of a comprehensive background check system, people who are ineligible to possess firearms routinely exploit the well-known loopholes in firearms laws. Individuals who commit crimes with firearms may intentionally seek to purchase guns from sellers who are not required to run background checks. Recent examples show that the loopholes in our background check system can have deadly consequences.

In 2022, a teenager shot and killed 10 people in Buffalo, New York. He said he bought the AR-15-style weapon in January, bought a shotgun in December and received a rifle as a Christmas present from his dad when he was 16. The shooter was 17 at the time and did not have a background check. He was taken to a hospital for a psychiatric evaluation under a state mental health law. New York is one of 19 states with red-flag laws that allow courts to take guns from people posing immediate danger.

In 2021, a man bought a Ruger AR-556 pistol and killed 10 people in Boulder, Colorado. His history included sudden rages and convictions of misdemeanor assault. He was sentenced to probation for attacking a high-school classmate. Colorado has a universal background check law covering almost all gun sales, but the misdemeanor conviction did not prevent him from buying a weapon, experts said. Had his conviction been a felony, federal law would have barred his purchase. A judge has ruled he is mentally incompetent to stand trial.

In 2019, a man fatally shot seven people and wounded 25 others in West Texas. The shooter previously failed a criminal background check when trying to purchase a gun, yet loopholes in our nation’s gun laws allowed him to bypass the background check system altogether. He obtained the AR-style weapon used in his deadly attack from an unlicensed seller who was not required to run a background check.

In 2018, in Appleton, WI, a man was prohibited from purchasing a gun because he was out on bond for a firearm-related felony domestic-violence case. He purchased a firearm from an unlicensed seller on Armslist.com without a background check. The next day he used the gun to kill his wife.

In 2016, a woman was killed and their two children shot by an ex-boyfriend, who purchased the gun from an unlicensed seller without a background check. He had been prohibited from purchasing a firearm due to a domestic-violence restraining order and a pending domestic-battery case.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>States without universal background checks on all gun sales had 15% higher homicide rates than those states which did.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 in 10</td>
<td>People convicted of gun crimes would have been prevented from owning a gun if their state had had stricter background checks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 million</td>
<td>Since their introduction in 1994, federal background checks have prevented four million guns from entering unsafe hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 35%</td>
<td>Background check denials involved someone previously convicted of a felony offense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 in 9</td>
<td>Potential buyers on Armslist.com would not pass a background check.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** Giffords Law Center
State Laws: Private Sales Loophole

The best way to ensure that guns are not sold to people prohibited from owning firearms is to require all people to undergo a background check prior to purchase. Federal law requires anyone buying from a federally licensed dealer, but not from a private individual, to get a background check. Twenty-two states and DC (but not Utah) have closed the private sales loophole by requiring purchasers to obtain a background check via a permit to purchase, or by requiring a background check at the point of sale. Some states require background checks for certain types of firearms, like handguns, while others require them for all types of firearms – the most comprehensive approach.

Permitting and Background Check Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Comprehensive</th>
<th>Less Comprehensive</th>
<th>Less Comprehensive</th>
<th>No Private Sales Provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both Permit and Point-of-Sale Background Check Required</td>
<td>Permit Without Point-of-Sale Background Check</td>
<td>Point-of-Sale Background Check Alone</td>
<td>No Permit or Point Of-Sale Background Check Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Guns: CT, DC, NJ</td>
<td>All Guns: HI, IL, MA, DE, NM, NV, OR, VT, VA, WA</td>
<td>All Guns: CA, CO, AK, AL, AR, AZ, FL, GA, IA, ID, IN, KS, KY, LA, ME, MN, MO, MS, MT, ND, NH, OH, OK, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, WI, WV, WY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handguns Only: NY, RI, MD</td>
<td>Handguns Only: NC, NE, MI</td>
<td>Handguns Only: PA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Giffords Law Center
Online gun exchanges like Armslist connect gun sellers to gun buyers. Armslist operates nationally like a Craigslist for firearms. Like Craigslist, buyers who see a listing of interest click on it and look at the details and photos. A buyer who decides to purchase the firearm contacts the seller.

Like Craigslist, there is a “contact seller” button where an interested buyer can message the seller: usually the seller will provide their private email or phone number. The buyer and seller negotiate a price and agree to meet to complete the transaction. **No background check. No record. Usually in cash.**

On October 3, 2022, there were 121 firearms listed for sale in Utah on the Armslist website. Of those, 93% (113 firearms) were for sale by a private seller, meaning the buyer could purchase the firearm without a background check.

Utah has its own Armslist, the Utah Gun Exchange. The big difference is that the bulk of the sellers are in Utah, making it very easy and convenient for buyers and sellers in Utah to meet, exchange money for guns and for the entire transaction to occur without a background check.

On October 3, 2022, there were 4,025 firearms listed for sale in Utah on the Utah Gun Exchange site. In 2020 92% of listed firearms were for sale by a private seller, meaning the buyer could purchase the firearm without a background check. The private sales loophole also applies at gun shows with a similar lack of background checks. Many states have closed this loophole by requiring background checks on all gun sales.

The estimated value of the firearms for sale online in Utah for one day in 2020 was $3,563,350. Although some sellers specify that taxes and background checks will be required, many do not. Assuming the bulk of these transactions occur person-to-person without taxes being paid, that represents over $150,000 in lost tax revenue at any one time for the state of Utah.

Sources: Armslist.com, utahgunexchange.com
Straw Purchasing, Gun Trafficking and Unscrupulous Dealers

Gun trafficking is the movement of guns from legal to illegal streams of commerce and occurs both within states and across state lines. According to the ATF, “Virtually every crime gun in the United States starts off as a legal firearm,” making the need to prevent gun trafficking a crucial part of a comprehensive approach to reducing gun-related crime. Guns are diverted into illegal gun markets in three common ways: straw purchases; secondary sales through private sellers; and theft from individual gun owners or firearm dealers.

A straw purchase happens when someone lies on an ATF form to purchase a firearm for an individual who is prohibited from owning a gun, does not want to wait for the completion of a background check or does not want their name associated with the transaction. Lying on federal forms to purchase a firearm for someone else is illegal.

A notorious straw-purchase case in Utah ended in the untimely death of University of Utah track star, Lauren McCluskey. A 24-year-old woman purchased the Beretta PX4 Storm .40-caliber handgun from a Salt Lake City Federal Firearm Licensed gun dealer for a 21-year-old man who loaned the gun to Melvin Rowland (who was prohibited from owning a gun because of previous domestic-violence charges). Rowland used it to kill Lauren McCluskey on the University of Utah campus.

In 2020 three California men faced federal gun trafficking charges after they allegedly bought or tried to buy 27 firearms in Utah over a four-month period. The men were charged with travel within the U.S. with intent to deal firearms without a license. In late October, the ATF learned that one of the guns, a Glock pistol, had been recovered during a traffic stop in Arizona involving a convicted felon. According to the complaint, one man told federal agents that he bought the guns for the others because they were unable to legally buy firearms in Utah. Investigators tracked the men down after a Sportsman's Warehouse contacted the ATF to report a suspicious attempt by a man to buy five pistols.

Unscrupulous, “bad apple” gun dealers supply the criminal gun market either by intentionally engaging in or being willfully blind in supplying dangerous people with guns, including through: sales to straw purchasers; sales to gun traffickers; or inadequate security and “off-the-books” sales. It is estimated that about 5% of gun dealers sell 90% of the guns recovered in crime.

Sources: KSL, ATF, Brady
Illegally Transported Firearms in Airports

On commercial flights firearms must be unloaded and locked in a hard-sided container and transported as checked baggage only. It is illegal to transport firearms, loaded or unloaded, in carry-on baggage. Yet, each year more firearms are confiscated from carry-on baggage by TSA. (The dip in 2020 was due to less travel with Covid.) Over 80% of those firearms are loaded.

Below is a comparison of the Salt Lake City (SLC) airport to the other nine airports with the most firearm discoveries in 2021. SLC is one of the smaller airports with the most firearms confiscated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># Seized in SLC</th>
<th># Seized in U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2,653</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3,957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>4,244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>4,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>5,972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparison of the Ten Airports with the Most TSA Firearm Discoveries in 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Airport</th>
<th># Firearms Seized</th>
<th># Million Passengers Enplaned</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Atlanta (ATL)</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>13.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dallas/Ft Worth (DFW)</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>10.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Houston Intercontinental (IAH)</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>15.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Phoenix (PHX)</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>10.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nashville (BNA)</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>21.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Denver (DEN)</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>4.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ft Lauderdale (FLL)</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>9.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Orlando (MCO)</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>6.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>New Orleans (MSY)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>29.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Salt Lake City (SLC)</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: TSA.gov, FAA.gov
Lost and Stolen Firearms

Gun theft is a growing problem across the country. Guns are three times more likely to be stolen if they are carried by the person or in a car. Recent data shows a link between stolen guns and crime.

- Many cities have reported alarming spikes in the number of firearms stolen from cars.
- Of 23,000 stolen firearms recovered by police between 2010 and 2016, the majority were recovered in connection with crimes (including 1,500 violent crimes).
- A Pittsburgh study found that nearly a third of firearms recovered at crime scenes had been stolen.
- Federal Law only requires licensed firearm dealers to report loss or theft.

Eleven states (CA, CT, DE, HI, IL, MA, NJ, NY, OH, RI, VA) and DC require firearm owners to report loss or theft of any firearm to law enforcement. Michigan (MI) requires firearm thefts to be reported, but not lost firearms. Maryland (MD) requires only lost or stolen handguns and assault weapons to be reported.

Utah does not require firearm owners to report loss or theft of firearms to law enforcement.

“There’s a high probability that when we do recover a firearm, it’s going to be found on somebody who might be involved in a crime or being arrested,” a Salt Lake Police Sgt said in 2022. “We were seeing this correlation between both the proliferation of guns, the theft of vehicle burglaries and home burglaries and the improper storage of those guns and then ultimately ending up out in violent crimes,” said Salt Lake County District Attorney Gill.

Laws that require firearm owners to notify law enforcement about the loss or theft of a firearm serve several public safety functions:

- Aid law enforcement in returning lost/stolen guns to their rightful owners
- Encourage gun owners to be more accountable for their weapons
- Help disarm individuals who are ineligible to possess firearms
- Deter gun trafficking and straw purchasing

Sources: Giffords Law Center, KSL, ATF
**The Many Facets of Gun Violence**

**FIREARM SUICIDE:** The majority of gun deaths are self-inflicted. The easy availability of firearms to those in distress makes suicide attempts more likely to result in death.

- More than half of all suicides in the United States are carried out with a firearm. 78% of gun suicide victims are white men.
- Gun suicides also have a disproportionate impact on teens, young adults, older men and veterans. Easy access to a gun triples the risk of suicide death.

**FIREARM HOMICIDE:** Any murder committed with a firearm, whether the murder is the result of an altercation, a domestic situation, road rage or during the commission of a criminal act, such as an armed robbery or retaliatory shooting.

- Because of easy access to guns, the U.S. has a much higher gun homicide rate compared to other high-income countries.
- Between 2019 and 2020, the U.S. experienced a 34% increase in gun homicide.
Facets of Gun Violence, cont.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDE: For the millions of American women and their children affected by domestic violence every year, guns in the hands of domestic abusers pose a serious, lethal threat.

- Nearly half of all women murdered are killed by intimate partners and firearms are the most common method. 25 million Americans have been threatened or injured by an intimate partner, with a gun.
- Domestic violence victims are five times as likely to be killed when abusers have access to guns.

YOUTH GUN VIOLENCE: Beyond the young lives cut short and debilitating injuries, exposure to gun violence causes trauma and decreased potential among children.

- Guns are the leading cause of death for those under 18, killing over 2000 children a year.
- Three million children will be directly exposed to gun violence resulting in death, injury or trauma each year.
- Young children are most affected by gun homicides in the home, which are often related to domestic or family violence. Older children are at an increased risk of gun suicide and homicides.
- The gun violence epidemic hits underserved communities of color particularly hard. Black children and teens are 19X more likely than their white counterparts to die of gun homicide. Hispanic children and teens are 3X more likely to die by firearm homicide than are their white peers.

MASS SHOOTINGS: While mass shootings with high casualty numbers gain the most media attention, most mass shootings stem from domestic violence, workplace violence or an altercation.

- In 2021, the U.S. averaged two mass shootings (four or more people shot in a single incident, not including the shooter) every day.
- Mass shootings can and do occur anywhere: homes, schools, places of worship, movie theaters, shopping centers, night clubs, street festivals, concerts and restaurants.

UNINTENTIONAL SHOOTINGS: Millions of homes contain unsafely stored guns. Few states require adequate safety training for handling firearms, contributing to unintentional shooting injuries and deaths.

- The majority of unintentional shooting deaths involve people under age 24. They are most often shot by someone their own age.
- The vast majority of unintentional firearm deaths among children are related to child access to firearms and are either self-inflicted or at the hands of another child.

Source: Giffords Law Center, Gun Violence Archive, GunPolicy.org
Firearm Suicide in the U.S.

Suicide in the U.S. is a significant public health problem and firearms play a large role. In 2020, over 24,290 people used a gun to take their own life: 67 people every single day.

American veterans disproportionately account for our nation’s firearm suicide epidemic. Over the last decade, the suicide rate for veterans has been much higher and risen faster than the suicide rate of the general population. According to the Veterans Administration Suicide Data Report, veterans account for 23% of all adult gun suicides, and 70% of those are undertaken by firearm.

Though most people who have attempted suicide have been experiencing emotional struggles, suicides are usually impulsive acts using whatever methods are immediately available. 48% of people harm themselves within ten minutes of deciding to attempt suicide. 71% do so within one hour.

In these moments of crisis, people who reach for guns are unlikely to survive. Firearms are by far the most lethal suicide attempt method. Approximately 90% of suicide attempts with a gun result in death.

While guns are used in only 5% of suicide attempts, they are responsible for over 50% of suicide deaths.

Firearm suicide rates vary greatly across the country. In places where gun ownership is more common, suicide rates, both overall and by gun, are generally higher. There is a substantive research linking easy access to firearms with an increased rate of firearm suicide. Suicide interventions that address access to lethal means are critical components of a comprehensive suicide prevention strategy.

Sources: CDC-WISQARS Fatal Injury Reports, UT Suicide Story, UT Dept of Health, Annals of Internal Medicine
Firearm Suicide in Utah: 2006 – 2020

Firearm suicide includes any completed suicide where a gun was used. Firearm suicides are unique in both their impulsivity and their lethality. Unlike other methods of suicide, firearm suicides take little planning and are almost always successful.

Firearm suicides make up the majority of Utah gun deaths every year. In 2020, they accounted for 79% of total gun deaths for the year. Nationally, firearm suicides made up 53% of total gun deaths. Firearm suicide rates in Utah consistently outpace the national average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>UT Deaths</th>
<th>UT Rate</th>
<th>U.S. Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>8.35</td>
<td>5.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>8.52</td>
<td>5.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>5.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>8.83</td>
<td>5.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>10.65</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>10.52</td>
<td>6.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>10.97</td>
<td>6.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>6.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>10.35</td>
<td>6.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>10.99</td>
<td>6.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>11.87</td>
<td>6.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>11.32</td>
<td>7.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>10.79</td>
<td>6.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>10.81</td>
<td>6.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rates are per 100,000

Between 2006 and 2020, firearm suicide rates in Utah increased 29%.

Sources: CDC-WISQARS Fatal Injury Reports
Utah Youth Suicide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Rate per 100K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>36</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Between 2006 and 2020, the firearm suicide rate increased 84% for ages 0-19. In 2006, there were 13 firearm suicides in this age group; in 2020, there were 28.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>UT Rate</th>
<th>U.S. Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>2009</td>
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<td>2019</td>
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<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rates are per 100,000

Sources: CDC-WISQARS Fatal Injury Reports
Safe Storage
Prevents Youth Firearm Suicides

Firearm suicides are on the rise among children and teens nationally and in Utah. Data from the National Violent Injury Statistics System reveal that most adolescent suicide victims die by suicide at their home with a firearm owned by a parent.

According to 2020 data from the CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics, firearms were involved in 46% of all suicides among young people 10 – 19 years old.

In Utah, firearm suicide rates for youth have increased 84% since 2006. Research indicates that many, if not most, of the young people used a gun from home - a gun they had easy access to.

Raising awareness about the importance of safe storage of firearms could not only reduce the number of unintentional shootings involving kids, it could reduce the number of Utah tweens and teens using a gun to take their own lives.

Safe Storage Laws in Utah

According to Giffords Law Center, Utah does not have any state laws requiring persons purchasing a firearm to safely store the firearm in their home.

Utah law does not require a locking device to accompany the sale of a firearm, and no state statutes require firearm owners to lock their weapons.

Some effort has been made to distribute free cable locks to Utah gun owners, but these locks are inadequate because they can be easily and quickly opened. Gun owners who are serious about their family’s safety use a gun safe accessible only by trained adults.

Guns should be stored locked and unloaded with ammunition stored separately. Lock boxes or safes that open with the owner’s fingerprint or RFID smart tags are also a good choice.

Sources: National Violent Injury Statistics System, Giffords Law Center
Child Access Prevention

Guns in homes pose a clear risk to the safety of children, especially when guns are not stored safely or securely. Tragic unintentional shootings and youth suicides occur far too often.

Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws hold gun owners accountable for the safe storage of their firearms. Such laws help prevent guns from falling into young hands. CAP laws have been shown to be effective at reducing youth suicides and unintentional shootings.

One 2017 study published in JAMA Pediatrics journal found that of 12 states where CAP laws had been in effect for at least one year, unintentional firearm deaths fell by 23% among children under 15 years of age. The same study found that CAP laws were associated with an 8.3% decrease in suicides among children ages 14 to 17.

A 2018 study published in The Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery found that:

Strong CAP laws were associated with a significant reduction in all self-inflicted and unintentional pediatric firearm injuries.

Weak CAP laws, which only impose liability for reckless endangerment rather than negligence or gross negligence, were associated with an increased risk of all pediatric firearm injuries.

**Gun Safety Programs**: In 2017, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report on programs that promote safe storage of firearms. The report found that informational sessions “did not instill consistent safe firearm habits in young children.” The NRA’s Eddie Eagle program succeeded at getting children between the ages of 4 and 6 to orally repeat rules on what to do when they encounter a gun. But those same children were NOT significantly more likely than others who hadn’t gone through the Eddie Eagle training program to actually follow through with what they had been taught when they encountered a gun.

Teaching children about gun safety is important, but it is in no way a substitution for securing guns and making them inaccessible to unauthorized users, especially curious kids.

Source: Giffords Law Center, Injury Epidemiology
**Child Access Prevention Laws Compared**

The strongest CAP laws impose criminal liability when a firearm is knowingly stored in a place a minor could access, regardless of whether the minor gains access (see Strong CAP laws below). The weakest laws prohibit certain persons, such as parents or guardians, from directly providing a firearm to a minor (see Weak CAP laws below). In Utah parents may be guilty for providing firearms to children only when they know of a substantial risk that the minor will use the firearm to commit a crime. A wide range of laws fall somewhere between these extremes. State CAP laws also differ on the definition of a “minor.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>States That Impose Criminal Liability When A Child Gains Access to Gun</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strong CAP Laws</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weak CAP Laws</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apply to Negligent Storage when the person “knows or reasonably should know” that a child may gain access to the firearm.</td>
<td>Apply only to Intentional, Knowing or Reckless Provision of Firearms to Minors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Common Exceptions**

States allow several exceptions to their CAP laws. The most common exception applies when the firearm is stored in a locked container (CA, CT, DC, FL, HI, IL, IA, MN, NH, NJ, NC, RI, TX and WA).

Another common exception applies when the minor gains access to the firearm by way of illegal entry of the premises (CA, CT, DC, FL, HI, IL, IA, MA, MD, MN, NH, NJ, NC, RI, TX, WA).

Other exceptions include cases when the firearm is used for hunting, sport shooting or agricultural purposes, when the minor uses the gun in defense of self or others, when the firearm is used to aid law enforcement or when the child has completed a firearm safety course.

*It is interesting that most states, including Utah, have a provision for the safe storage of firearms in foster care homes. If this law is good for children in foster care, why not for all Utah children?*

Source: Giffords Law Center, Rand Corp.
**Guns and Domestic Violence in the U.S.**

Firearms and domestic violence are a lethal combination: injuring and killing women, children and bystanders every day in the United States. The deadly intersection between guns and domestic violence is a uniquely American problem. **Two-thirds of all mass shootings occur during a domestic violence incident.**

Violence against women is a public health crisis and guns make violent crimes against women more deadly. Most women who die by gun violence are killed in an intimate partner or domestic violence context. In fact, the presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide for the woman five-fold. Additionally, more than 50 percent of all intimate partner-related murders of women are committed with a firearm.

Even when a weapon is not discharged, abusers often use the presence of a gun to intimidate and terrorize victims, inflicting enormous psychological damage. A paper published in the journal *Violence and Gender* in 2017 noted that: “The fear of a firearm threat is significantly associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It’s stronger even than the link between physical or sexual abuse and PTSD.”

Despite the clear risk domestic violence presents, state and federal laws still make it too easy for abusers to obtain firearms or to regain access to guns they have dispossessed to someone else. Protecting the lives of women and their children requires that lawmakers take steps to make it as difficult as possible for dangerous abusers and stalkers to gain access to firearms.

Across the country, a number of states have adopted stronger domestic violence laws. A robust body of research shows that these laws are associated with reductions in intimate partner homicides by as much as 25%. States like Utah with weak gun laws see higher rates of domestic violence gun homicide.

**81%**

Of Americans support legislation that keeps guns away from domestic abusers.

**Each year 687**

Women in America are shot and killed by an intimate partner: that is one woman every 13 hours.

**55%**

Of intimate partner homicides are committed with firearms, according to FBI Crime Reporting data.

**4.5 million**

Women in America have been threatened with a gun by an intimate partner and nearly 1 million women alive today have survived being shot by an intimate partner.

Sources: CDC-WISQARS Fatal Injury Reports, Giffords Law Center, Center for American Progress, FBI
Guns and Domestic Violence in Utah

**Domestic violence (DV) homicide is Utah’s second leading cause of gun deaths.** Utah’s rate of domestic violence homicide is consistently higher than the national average.

Perpetrators of domestic violence isolate victims from friends, family members and co-workers. There are many reasons victims do not report sexual abuse in general, and domestic violence involves even more complexity. Research on spousal rape finds that many survivors do not resist due to fear of injury, fear of their efforts being futile and fear of how that resistance would influence the marriage. During the COVID-19 pandemic isolation, domestic violence calls increased.

**On one day in 2020, programs in Utah served 1,205 victims of domestic violence and fielded 359 hotline calls.**

Anyone of any race, gender, age, sexual orientation, social status or religion can be a victim of domestic violence.

Every year 80 Utah children witness either the murder or attempted murder of their mothers. When children experience or witness domestic violence in the home, it becomes an adverse childhood experience (ACE). These experiences undermine a child’s sense of safety, stability and bonding and can have devastating lifelong impacts. In long-term rigorous studies, ACEs during childhood have been linked to chronic health problems (including cancer, diabetes and heart disease), mental illness, substance use problems, sex trafficking, food insecurity, toxic stress and suicide. ACEs also negatively impact educational completion, job opportunities and even earning potential.

**Domestic violence is the third leading cause of homelessness among families.** 50% of all women who are homeless report that domestic violence was the immediate cause of their homelessness, according to The National Center on Family Homelessness.

Source: Utah Domestic Violence Coalition
Firearm homicide includes any murder committed with a firearm, whether the murder is the result of an altercation, a domestic situation, road rage or during the commission of a criminal act, such as an armed robbery or retaliatory shooting.

Utah’s firearm homicide rates are lower than the national average; however, between 2011 and 2020, firearm homicide rates in Utah increased 141% with a sharp rise between 2019 and 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Utah Deaths</th>
<th>Utah Rate</th>
<th>U.S. Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2.31</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CDC-WISQARS Fatal Injury Report
Utah’s Stand Your Ground (SYG) Law

Utah was one of the first states to adopt a self-defense gun law. In 1994 Utah Code Section 76-2-402 provided that an individual was justified in using force intended or likely to cause death or serious bodily injury only if the individual reasonably believed that force was necessary to prevent death or serious bodily injury to the individual. Basically, it indicated that a person had the right to defend themselves with deadly force even outside of their home or property.

This law was amended in 2018 to include that persons who used deadly force in a public altercation would not have to prove that they were unable to reasonably retreat, even if there was a safe way to do so. Such a law helped George Zimmerman escape a murder conviction in the 2012 Florida shooting of Trayvon Martin, a black teenager returning to his home from a store.

In 2021, the Utah Legislature amended the law again to require a pre-hearing on all cases where a person claims “self-defense” in a use of force that harms another. The pre-trial hearing would require that the prosecution prove by clear and convincing evidence that the person did not act in self-defense or defense of others. The case would be dismissed otherwise. This new change created an extra hurdle in prosecution of perpetrators of violence, revictimized victims and put judges in the position of making decisions meant for juries.

30-50/month
People are killed nationally each month due to SYG laws.

8%
Increase in homicides associated with SYG laws.

79%
Of SYG cases in Florida where the assailant could have retreated to avoid confrontation.

3.5X
Cases of white-on-black homicide were 3.5 times more likely to be ruled as justified than cases of white-on-white.

Before Utah's SYG law was enacted, a person had a duty to retreat if he or she could safely do so.

GVPedia provides academic papers on the negative effects of SYG laws.

- Cheng and Hoekstra found that from 2000-2010 “Castle Doctrine” and SYG laws increased homicide by 8%. The best available evidence indicated this increase was not entirely driven by more justifiable homicides.

- A study on SYG laws in Arizona by M. Chamlin, found that those laws correlated with an increase in all forms of robberies and suicides.

- A 2021 Systemic Review on the Effects of Laws Expanding Civilian Rights to Use Deadly Force in Self-Defense on Violence and Crime in the American Journal of Public Health looked at 25 studies that estimated population-level impacts of laws expanding civilian rights to use deadly force in self-defense, all of which focused on Stand-Your-Ground or other expansions to self-defense laws in the United States. While only Florida showed robust increases in firearm homicide, most studies found that SYG laws are associated with increases in violence, and there are racial inequities in the application of these laws.

Sources: GVPedia, Giffords Law Center, utah.gov
Crisis Intervention Orders (CIO)

Crisis Intervention Orders, also known as Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO) or Red Flag Laws, empower families and law enforcement to prevent gun tragedies by allowing them to petition a court to temporarily remove guns from individuals who exhibit an elevated risk of endangering themselves or others. Under a Crisis Intervention Order people in crisis situations are temporarily prohibited from purchasing or accessing firearms and must relinquish any guns they possess while the order is in effect.

CIOs are modeled on well-established systems of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Protection Orders with careful considerations for due process and standards for evidence. CIO laws allow intervention *ex parte* before the respondent has appeared before judge or other adjudicator, a common lifesaving practice with other types of protection orders, particularly in the realm of domestic violence. CIOs can save lives while ensuring critical legal protections for respondents.

If a court finds that an individual poses an imminent threat to themselves or others, it may issue an *ex parte* CIO that lasts for a limited period of time, usually between 7 and 21 days. After a hearing at which the respondent has the opportunity to appear, the court may extend the CIO for a longer period if the court finds that the respondent poses a significant ongoing danger.

Source: Utah Domestic Violence Coalition
Crisis Intervention Orders: Success in Other States

- In Colorado just over a third of CIOs were issued after people made threats of suicide and another third after people threatened to kill others, according to court records. The remainder included cases with threats of both suicide and homicide, or cases in which reckless use of a gun was considered likely.
- Some CIO's require a mental health evaluation as part of the judge’s orders and provide entry into mental health treatment.

Crisis Intervention Orders in other states have been shown to be extremely effective at preventing firearm suicides.

- In Connecticut suicide rates decreased by 14% after enactment of CIO legislation.
- Indiana saw a 7.5% drop in its suicide rates when CIO was adopted.
- After the third time an Arapahoe County, Colorado man made serious threats of killing himself, his wife sought a CIO to keep him from legally purchasing another gun. Her husband agreed it was a good idea and did not fight the protection order. His wife credits the law as part of the reason he’s still alive.

States are also successfully using these laws to temporarily disarm individuals who have made significant and credible threats of violence.

- At least four individuals who made threats of violence against schools were disarmed in the first three months after Maryland implemented its crisis intervention law.
- Similarly, CIO laws have been used to remove firearms from a Florida resident who said that murder would be “fun and addicting” and a Vermont resident who kept a diary titled “Journal of an Active Shooter.”
- Washington State used its CIO law to disarm the leader of an organized Neo-Nazi hate group who was training to wage a “race war” with a cache of military-style weapons.


72% Of Utahns, including Republicans, Democrats and gun owners support CIOs.

15 For every 15 firearm removals under Connecticut’s and Indiana’s crisis intervention laws, approximately one life was saved through an averted suicide.

21 in 2 years Cases of people threatening mass shootings in California used CIO to disarm those people.

Source: Giffords Law Center, Deseret News, Annuls of Internal Medicine
Expanded Background Checks

An estimated 733,800 guns were sold in Utah from January through July of 2021, 19.3% more than there had been the previous year. An estimated 592,300 guns were sold from January through July 2022 based on FBI background check data. Adjusted for population, this is equal to about 188 firearm sales for every 1,000 people, the third highest gun-sale rate among states.

Background checks that are required and properly enforced help to keep guns out of dangerous hands and to prevent guns from being diverted to the illegal-gun market.

Background checks are easy and convenient and impose almost no burden on law-abiding gun purchasers.

- In at least 90% of cases, firearm background checks processed through the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) are resolved immediately. The average processing time for a NICS check is less than two minutes.
- Contrary to gun-lobby claims, background checks rarely provide false-positive results. The FBI’s quality control evaluations suggest that background checks are accurate over 99% of the time.

For more than a decade, the vast majority of the American public has supported laws requiring background checks on all firearm purchases. At least 69% of NRA members support comprehensive background checks.

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act was passed by the U.S. Congress in 2022. The Act now requires all gun purchasers under the age of 21 to undergo an expanded background check when buying from a federally licensed dealer. These new background checks include checking the databases of local law enforcement to see if the purchaser has a juvenile record that would disqualify them from owning a gun.

4 million
Since 1994 over four million people have been legally prohibited from purchasing a gun or denied a permit to purchase.

42%
Of denials involved people with felony offenses.

90%
Of both gun owners and non-gun owners support universal background checks.

30%
States without universal background check laws export crime guns across state lines at a 30% higher rate than states that require background check on all gun sales.

Source: Giffords Law Center
Support for Expanded Background Checks in Utah and the U.S.

Americans and Utahns support expanding background checks to include all gun sales. In recent polling conducted by the Washington Post and ABC News, 89% of Americans favor expanded background checks.

In 2022, polling conducted by The Hinckley Institute found that 90% of Utahns support background checks on all gun sales.

Sources: Washington Post, ABC News, Deseret News/Hinckley Institute
U.S. Youth Gun Violence

Every year almost 8,000 American children and teens (birth to 17) are shot. The effects of gun violence extend far beyond those struck by a bullet. It is estimated that 5% (3.6 million) of America’s children witness a shooting each year according to research published in *JAMA Pediatrics*. Gun violence shapes the lives of the children who witness it, know someone who was shot or live in fear of the next shooting.

A recent study published in the *Journal of the American College of Surgeons* found that firearm-related injuries are the leading cause of pediatric death in the U.S.

According to 2020 CDC data, teens account for 83% of children killed with guns. A slight majority, 54%, of annual child gun deaths are homicides. But every year, **36% (over 700 children and teens) take their own lives with guns**, 5% die in unintentional shootings and 2% are killed by guns in ambiguous or undetermined situations.

When it comes to firearm suicides, the overwhelming number of kids using a gun to take their own lives are white. Between 2000 and 2020, over 86% of children under 18 who died by suicide with a gun were white.

In 2018, *JAMA Pediatrics* published a study that noted the wide racial disparity in firearm homicides. Despite the fact that only 13% of Americans are black, 56% of American children killed in gun homicides are black.

According to 2018 CDC data, guns are the leading cause of death for black children and teens in America, and they are 19X more likely than their white counterparts to die by firearm homicide. They are 10X more likely to be hospitalized for a firearm assault than white children. Hispanic children and teens are 3X more likely to die by firearm homicide than their white peers.

Source: CDC-WISQARS Fatal Injury Reports
Utah Youth Gun Deaths: 2011 – 2020

Firearm mortality includes all forms of fatal gun violence: homicides, fatal domestic violence shootings and legal intervention, as well as firearm suicides, unintentional shootings and shootings where the intent or motive is undetermined. Although our youth homicide rate is lower than the national average, for four of the last ten years our overall youth gun death rate was higher than the national average due primarily to youth suicides.

Between 2011 and 2020, firearm mortality in Utah increased 117% for ages 0-19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Utah Rate</th>
<th>U.S. Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>3.26</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2016</td>
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<td>2019</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.11</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>5.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rates are per 100,000 people.

The rate of firearm mortalities in Utah increased by 117% from 2011 to 2020 for ages 0-19.

In 2011 there were 20 firearm deaths in the age group; in 2020 there were 46.

For several years starting in 2014, Utah's rate of firearm mortality for ages 0-19 exceeded the U.S.'s rate for the same age group.
Mass Shootings

Of the ten deadliest mass shootings in American history, seven took place in the last ten years.*

2. *Pulse, Orlando, FL., June 2016: 49 killed and more than 50 injured
5. *First Baptist Church, Sutherland Springs, TX., Nov. 2017: 26 killed
7. *Walmart, El Paso, TX., Aug. 3, 2019: At least 22 killed, 26 injured
8. McDonald’s, San Ysidro, CA., July 1984: 21 killed

According to the American Psychiatric Association, mass shootings by people with serious mental illness represent less than 1% of the yearly gun homicides in America. Research shows that people with a mental illness are more likely to harm themselves than others and are often the victims of violent crime. Mental health experts discourage blaming mental illness for gun violence, including mass shootings, noting that the most consistent and powerful predictors that someone will resort to gun violence are a history of violent behavior, substance abuse, misogyny and easy access to firearms.

Although high profile “spectacle shootings” receive most of the media attention, they make up only a fraction of mass shootings (events where four or more people are killed or injured) in the U.S. The most common mass shootings are domestic violence incidents involving entire families and usually end with the shooter dying by suicide.

691
In 2021 there were 691 mass shootings in the U.S. according to data from the Gun Violence Archive.

13/week
In 2021, there were more than 13 mass shootings per week on average in the U.S.

78%
Of mass shooters “exhibited behaviours that caused concerns in others,” according to a report on mass shootings published by the U.S. Secret Service.

The places that suffer mass shootings run the full gamut of American communities. These tragedies occur in large cities and small towns; in rich, poor and middle-class places; and in racially mixed as well as predominantly white communities. Most occur in mundane places, like residences, driveways and parking lots. Some are gang-related; others are related to domestic violence or workplace disputes.
Mass Shootings in Utah

Mass shootings are defined as an event where four or more people are injured or killed. There have been three mass shootings in Utah in recent history: the Hi-Fi Murders, the Trolley Square Shooting and the Grantsville case of familicide. The largest mass shooting in U.S. history was the Las Vegas massacre. Three Utahns were killed and many more were injured or traumatized by this mass shooting.

Hi-Fi Murders, Ogden, UT, April 22, 1974: 3 killed, 2 injured

Remembering the victims:
- Sherry Michelle Ansley, 18
- Carol Naisbitt, 52
- Stanley Walker, 20
Injured:
- Byron Naisbitt, 16
- Orren Walker, 43

Trolley Square Shooting, SLC, UT, February 12, 2007: 6 killed, 4 injured

Remembering the victims:
- Jeffrey Walker, 53
- Vanessa Quinn, 29
- Brad Frantz, 24
- Kirsten Hinckley, 15
- Teresa Ellis, 29
Injured:
- Alan “A.J.” Walker, 16 (son of Jeffrey Walker)
- Shawn Munns, 34
- Carolyn Tuft, 43 (mother of Kirsten Hinckley)
- Stacy Hanson, 53, 1 injured

Grantsville, UT, January 17, 2020: 4 killed

Remembering the victims:
- Consuela Alejandra Haynie, 52
- Milan Haynie, 12
- Alexis Haynie, 15
- Matthey Haynie, 14
The perpetrator of the Grantsville shooting of 2020 used a family handgun, according to reports from local news sources. This prompted a tweet from Governor Gary Herbert urging Utah families to secure their firearms.


Although the Las Vegas massacre was not in Utah, three of the victims and scores of the injured and traumatized attendees were Utah residents:

Remembering Utah victims:
- Heather Warino Alvarado, 35, who operated a day care center in Cedar City.
- Cameron Robinson, 29, lived in St. George and worked for the city of Las Vegas
- Neysa Tonks, 45, a Brighton High School graduate

Sources: KSL.com and KUTV.com
Unintentional Shootings:
Kids Shooting Kids in Utah 2011 - 2020

Media Accounts of Unintentional Shootings Involving Utah Children and Teens

Every year in Utah, there are several cases of unintentional shootings where either a child unintentionally shoots someone or a child is unintentionally shot. The Gun Violence Archive keeps the most comprehensive database of unintentional shootings, but local news outlets provide the details.

Methods

This information came from an electronic search of the archives of Utah news outlets like the Salt Lake Tribune, Deseret News and KSL over a 10-year interval from 2011-2020. Reports were restricted to youth under the age of 19. The news media accounts often included the age and sex of victim, fatality or injury, age of the shooter, location of the shooting, weapon type and other pertinent information.

Results

17 cases are outlined here, with most of these incidents involving hospitalization. In four instances, or 22%, the victim of the shooting died. The average age of victims was 11. In 72% of the incidents, the shootings involved a male victim. Most newspaper accounts also reported the relationship between the victim and the shooter. In 19 out of the 41 cases, the shooter was a friend or relative of the victim.

Although the majority of unintentional shootings take place in the home of the gun owner, there were large numbers of cases with a different setting. One case involved a parent taking a teenager to a gun range; another involved teens being taken on a hunting trip. Two shootings took place in vehicles. Two cases involved the victims being bystanders. Other cases happened in homes of relatives or friends of the gun owners.

Seventeen unintentional shootings involving minors in Utah over a ten-year span are outlined on the following two pages.

ROY: A 15-year-old boy unintentionally shot himself in the face. The boy was taken to McKay Dee Hospital where he was expected to survive (Salt Lake Tribune, April 29, 2011).

FRUIT HEIGHTS: A 15-year-old boy unintentionally shot himself in the head with a handgun while at a gun range with his father. The boy tried to sit down on a swivel seat but fell and lost control of the gun, which fired. A doctor was at the range and provided CPR until help could arrive. The boy was transported to a hospital in Salt Lake City in critical condition (Salt Lake Tribune, August 27, 2011).

RICHFIELD: An 18-year-old was unintentionally shot when her boyfriend reached into the back of his pickup truck to pull a tire iron out and accidentally discharged a .30-06 rifle. The couple had stopped their car due to a flat tire and the woman did not know she had been shot until she collapsed while walking. The woman was taken to Utah Valley Regional Medical Center (Salt Lake Tribune, February 18, 2013).
Unintentional Shootings, cont.

COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS: A 17-year-old boy was unintentionally shot by his friend with a stolen .45 caliber revolver. The friend did not know it was loaded and had received it as a birthday present from another friend, who had stolen it from a skate park. The group of friends had gotten together to celebrate the end of the school year (KSL, June 9, 2014).

SNOWVILLE: A 4-year-old boy was unintentionally shot in the foot with a shotgun by his 3-year old brother. The house was being cleaned by the two, along with a sister and their grandfather in preparation to sell the house. Multiple other guns were also in the immediate area. The boy was originally taken to Bear River Valley Hospital with non-life-threatening injuries before being transferred to Primary Children’s for surgery on his foot (Deseret News, September 20, 2015).

LOGAN: A 16-year-old boy unintentionally shot himself in the leg when he was cleaning a .40-caliber handgun. The teen had not removed the ammunition before cleaning the gun and was home alone at the time of the incident. The teen called his grandmother, who called the police and then the boy was taken to a nearby hospital. Police anticipated he would make a full recovery (Salt Lake Tribune, September 25, 2016).

MOUNT PLEASANT: A 10-year-old boy was wounded by a gunshot when he was taking a gun out of a gun safe. The boy and an 11-year-old family member were found at the scene. Police said that one of the children knew the combination to the gun safe, where a .40-caliber handgun was located. The gun may have gone off when the boy was taking it out of the safe. The boy was expected to make a full recovery (KSL, August 16, 2017).

SUMMIT COUNTY: A 12-year-old boy unintentionally shot his 20-year-old brother in the legs while they were hunting elk in the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Both siblings noticed an elk and fired and the 12-year-old’s bullet went through the older brother’s thigh. Utah law requires anyone born after the end of 1965 to pass the basic Utah Hunter Education program and minors must take the test by themselves. While hunting, the person must be accompanied by an adult at all times (Fox13News, October 19, 2017).

SANDY: A 3-year-old was transported to a hospital after a gun was unintentionally discharged at a party. During the party, a gun being passed around by party-goers was discharged and a bullet hit the toddler in the arm. The police believe that the bullet also grazed the leg of the 28-year-old father. Both the father and the toddler were transported to a nearby hospital with no life-threatening injuries. (KSL, October 21, 2017).

BALLARD: A 2-year-old girl was unintentionally shot by a sibling when the sibling was moving a gun. The kids were told to clean up their toys by their parents. A gun that had been used the previous day during a hunting trip was leaning against a wall and when an older sibling went to move it, it discharged, hitting the 2-year-old girl. The parents immediately transported her to the hospital where she died from her injuries (Fox13News, December 11, 2017).

VERNAL: A 2-year-old boy was unintentionally shot in the chest after climbing some shelves and finding a handgun. Family members were at home at the time of the incident and the boy was expected to make a full recovery. Police and paramedics made it quickly to the scene to transport the boy to a Salt Lake hospital (Deseret News, January 25, 2018).

WEST VALLEY CITY: A 3-year-old girl and her mother along with another bystander were unintentionally shot and injured when a man dropped his gun. The girl and her mother were exiting a Smith’s when a man nearby dropped his gun and it fired. Fragments hit the girl and her mother; the father was not hit. The family was visiting from Las Vegas (KUTV, May 27, 2018).
Unintentional Shootings, cont.

TOOELE: A 14-year-old boy was critically injured after a shooting. A neighbor heard gunshots and seeing the boy exiting the house in a daze, called 911. Police were unsure of the timeline of events (KSL, July 1, 2018).

MONTE CRISTO: A 14-year-old Weber County boy died Sunday afternoon after authorities say he was accidentally shot and killed while riding in a car with his family near target shooters in a remote area in northern Utah. The boy was sitting in the back seat of the family car as his father drove them out of the mountains to return home, when a bullet broke through the window and struck the boy in the head (September 24, 2018).

WEST VALLEY CITY: A 15-year old was shot and killed inside a home during a school lunch break. A 14-year-old boy picked up a gun in a bedroom and waved it around before pointing it and firing. He told police he thought the safety was on (Deseret News, February 5, 2019).

MURRAY: A 3-year-old Murray boy shot himself in the head with a gun he found on a counter in his home. Investigators believe the child woke up before other members of his family and climbed up on a counter, where he found the gun (Salt Lake Tribune, January 31, 2020).

BRIGHAM CITY: A Brigham City child was hospitalized after police say he unintentionally shot himself. The 9-year-old boy was taken to Brigham City Hospital and then to Primary Children’s Hospital in Salt Lake City after he unintentionally shot himself in the head (Salt Lake Tribune, January 31, 2020).

Sources: Various Utah News Reports
Efficacy of Child Access Prevention Laws

Numerous peer-reviewed academic studies that address the relationship between a state’s firearm child-access prevention laws and their rate of juvenile unintentional shootings and firearm suicides have been published. Below are examples of some of the studies:

*Variability of Child Access Prevention Laws and Pediatric Firearm Injuries* Emma C. Hamilton, MD; Charles C. Miller, III, PhD; Charles S. Cox, Jr., MD; Kevin P. Lally, MD; Mary T. Austin, MD, MPH Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery (2018)

**Key Findings:** After adjusting for race, sex, age and socioeconomic income quartile, strong child-access prevention (CAP) laws were associated with a significant reduction in all, self-inflicted and unintentional pediatric firearm injuries. Weak CAP laws, which only impose liability for reckless endangerment, were associated with an increased risk of all pediatric firearm injuries. The association of CAP laws on hospitalizations for pediatric firearm injuries differed greatly depending on whether a state had adopted a strong CAP law or weak CAP law. Implementation by each state of a strong CAP law which requires safe storage of firearms has the potential to significantly reduce pediatric firearm injuries.

*State Firearm Laws, Firearm Ownership and Safety Practice Among Families of Preschool Aged Children* Kate C. Pricket, MPAff; Alexa Martin-Storey, PhD; Rovert Crosnoe, PhD American Journal of Public Health (2014)

**Key Findings:** Firearm legislation and CAP laws interacted to predict ownership and storage behaviors with unsafe storage least likely among families in states with both CAP laws and stronger firearm legislation.

*The Effect of Child Access Prevention Laws on Unintentional Child Firearm Fatalities, 1979-2000* Lisa Hepburn, PhD, MPH; Deborah Azrael PhD, MS; Matthew Miller, MD, ScD, MPH; David Hemenway, PhD Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery (2005)

**Key Findings:** Most states that enacted CAP laws experienced subsequent declines in the rate of unintentional firearm deaths for children age 0 to 14 compared with states not enacting the laws.


**Key Findings:** Negligence-specific child access prevention firearm laws were associated with a 13% reduction in all-intent firearm fatalities, a 15% reduction in firearm homicides, a 12% reduction in firearm suicides and a 13% reduction in unintentional firearm fatalities among children aged 0 to 14 years. Absence of the most stringent negligence laws accounted for 29% of pediatric firearm fatalities.

Sources: medical journals
Firearm Mortality Rates and Gun Law Grades

In its grading system, Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gives states with strong gun laws an A grade, while the weakest are given an F. States with A grades have implemented laws such as expanded background checks, crisis intervention orders, no third-party firearm dispossession and stringent requirements to obtain a gun permit. Firearm mortality includes all forms of fatal gun violence: homicides, suicides and unintentional shooting deaths. Both the gun death rates and gun grades are for 2021, the most recent year gun death data is available. States with stronger gun laws tend to have lower gun death rates.

Utah was given an F grade by Giffords Law Center in its Annual State Scorecard for the year 2021. Utah went from a grade D in 2018 to a grade F in 2021. Two recent changes to Utah’s gun laws are responsible for the downgrading. The first was the passage of the “permitless carry” bill that was signed into law in 2021 by Governor Cox. This bill took away the requirement for persons to undergo training and a background check in order to conceal carry a firearm. The second was the 2021 change to Utah’s Stand Your Ground law which made it even easier to shoot and kill someone without legal repercussions.

Source: Giffords Law Center
Numerous published, peer-reviewed academic studies address the relationship between a state’s firearm laws and their rate of gun death. Below are examples of some of the most recent studies:


**Key Findings:** Right-to-carry (RTC) laws are associated with higher aggregate violent crime rates and the size of the deleterious effects that are associated with the passage of RTC laws climbs over time. Violent crime in RTC states was estimated to be 13 to 15 percent higher, over a period of 10 years, than it would have been had the state not adopted the law.


**Key Findings:** In this 5-year analysis, states with stricter gun laws and laws requiring universal background checks for firearm purchases had lower firearm-related pediatric mortality rates. These findings support the need for further investigation to understand the impact of firearm legislation on pediatric mortality.

*Firearm Laws and Firearm Homicides: A Systematic Review* Lois K. Lee, MD, MPH; Eric W. Fleegler MD, MPH; Caitlin Farrell, MD; Elorm Avakama, BS; Saranya Srinivasan, MD; David Hemenway, PhD; Michael Montreaux, ScD Journal of the American Medical Association (2017)

**Key Findings:** The strength of firearm legislation in general and laws related to strengthening background checks and permit-to-purchase in particular is associated with decreased firearm homicide rates. High-quality research is important to further evaluate the effectiveness of these laws.

*Easiness of Legal Access to Concealed Firearm Permits and Homicide Rates in the United States* Michael Siegel MD, MPH; Ziming Xuan ScD, Sm, MA; Craig S. Ross PhD, MBA; Sandro Galea MD, DrPH, MPH; Bindu Kalesan PhD, MPH, MSc; Eric Fleegler MD, MPH; and Kristin A. Goss PhD, MPP Journal of American Health (2017)

**Key Findings:** Shall-issue laws were significantly associated with 6.5% higher total homicide rates, 8.6% higher firearm homicide rates and 10.6% higher handgun homicide rates, but were not significantly associated with long-gun or non-firearm homicide. Shall-issue laws are associated with significantly higher rates of total, firearm-related and handgun-related homicide.

Sources: medical journals, GVPedia
Summary

The information provided here establishes that gun violence in Utah and the United States is a major health and safety problem—one involving more annual deaths in the U.S. than vehicle fatalities. The depth and breadth of the data in this report quantify the levels of death, injury and suffering resulting from gun violence, but they show that society has the available means to take on the problems and to reduce the violence and its effects.

- Firearms are used in more than half of all suicides in the United States, with a disproportionate impact on teens, young adults, older men and veterans. Adoption of measures that reduce easy access to guns could cut the risk of suicide deaths by two thirds.

- Similarly, action by national and state governments could result in a major reduction in gun-related domestic violence homicide that affects millions of American women and their children every year. For example, adoption of strong crisis intervention/protection laws could go a long way toward reducing domestic-violence homicides by an intimate partner—over 650 per year in the U.S.—as well as reducing the incidences of millions of women who are injured or threatened with a gun by an intimate partner.

- Youth gun violence cuts lives short and causes debilitating injuries and family sorrow. Over 2,000 minors are killed by guns annually and 3.6 million children are directly exposed to gun violence. Fewer available firearms and safer storage in the home would significantly reduce these tragedies.

- The U.S. experiences 13 mass shootings (four or more persons shot in a single incident, not including the shooter) per week, a devastating statistic directly related to the easy availability of firearms and the absence of effective background checks that would deter dangerous individuals.

- Unintentional shooting deaths continue to occur at unacceptable levels—most often involving people under age 24 shooting someone their own age. Few states require adequate safety training for handling firearms or requirements to store firearms properly in homes with children.

The level of gun violence in the U.S. is a phenomenon that the rest of the civilized world cannot comprehend. Yet, as the information laid out in this report demonstrates, the societal means exist to combat and reduce the violence.