

A Message to Parents from Attorney General Davenport on Safe Firearm Storage

Why Safe Storage Matters

More than half of all U.S. gun owners do not practice safe gun storage, and 4.6 million young people in the U.S. live in homes with at least one gun that is loaded and unlocked.¹

Even if you've talked with your child about firearm safety, they may not recognize the risks of handling a firearm. Safe firearm storage helps prevent unintentional injuries, protects children and teens, and supports responsible firearm ownership.

Practical Steps for Families

Safe storage is one part of creating a safer home. In addition to keeping the firearm locked and inaccessible, it is also a good idea to:

- Store ammunition in a separate locked location.
- Keep keys or lock combinations where children cannot access them.
- Check that firearms are unloaded before storing them.
- Talk with children about what to do if they ever find a firearm: **Stop. Don't touch it. Leave the area. Tell a trusted adult immediately.**

Safe storage protects children, supports responsible firearm ownership, and helps prevent tragic accidents.

What New Jersey Law Requires

New Jersey has a safe firearm storage law designed to protect unsupervised children from gaining access to firearms.²

If you know—or reasonably should know—that a child under 16 could access a **loaded firearm** in your home or another property you control, you can be held **legally responsible** if that child gains access to it.

The law recognizes several ways to securely store a firearm:

- Keep it in a securely locked safe, box, or other locked container.
- Store it in a location that is secure and inaccessible to children.
- Use a trigger lock or similar locking device.³

When Does the Law Apply?

The law comes into play **after a child gains access to a firearm. A child is anyone under the age of 16.** Safe storage is the best way to help prevent that situation from happening in the first place.

A Conversation Worth Having

If your child visits another home for a playdate, it's okay to ask whether firearms are present and, if they are, whether they are securely stored.

1. Kim, R., Wagner, E. D., Nestadt, P. S., Somayaji, N., Horwitz, J., & Crifasi, C. K. (2025). *Gun Violence in the United States 2023: Examining the Gun Suicide Epidemic*. Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, Johns Hopkins Center for Suicide Prevention. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.
2. N.J. Stat. Ann. § 2C:58-15.

3. *Anyone who purchases a handgun in New Jersey is eligible for a \$5 instant rebate on the purchase of a trigger locking device compatible with the firearm purchased.* N.J. Stat. Ann. § 2C:58-17.

