

Our Public Health Approach to Firearm Injury Prevention

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Firearm-related injury is a public health issue

- In an average year:



155 King County
residents die from
firearm-related injuries
(68% suicide, 25% homicide)



149 hospitalizations for
nonfatal firearm injuries in
King County
(46% unintentional, 40% assault)

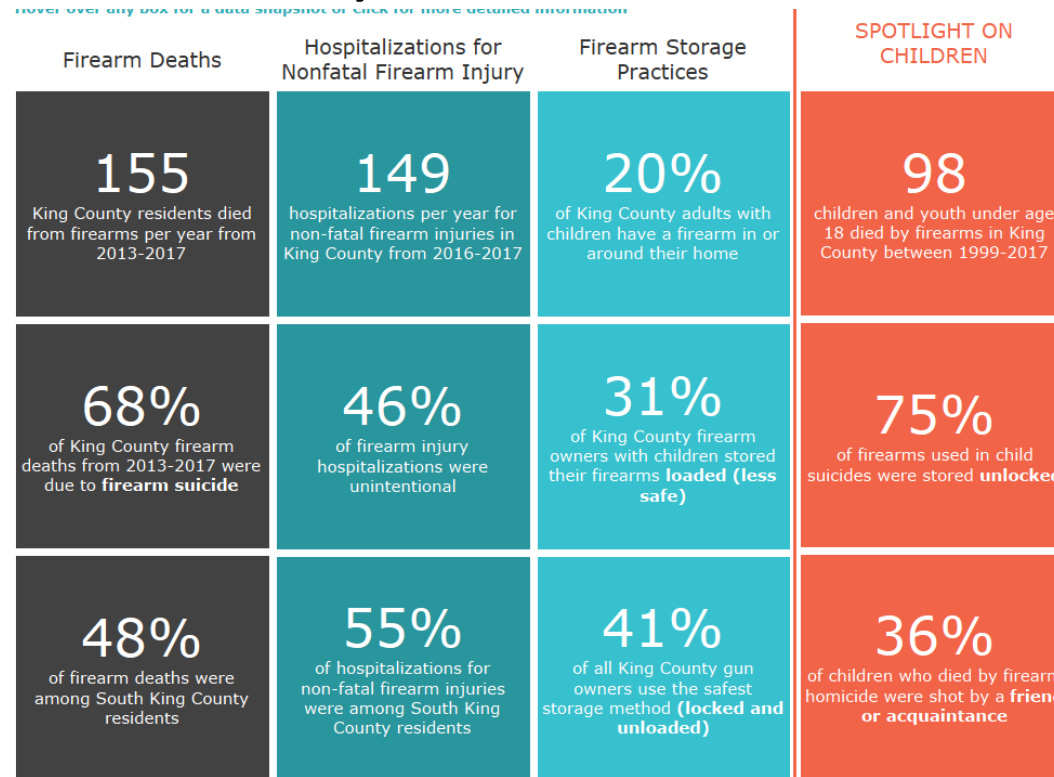
- Injury and psychological trauma from being shot can contribute to lifelong experiences of mental and physical illness and harmful community trauma.
- Firearm-related injury and death are predictable and preventable.

The public health approach to firearm tragedy prevention



1. Understanding the problem using data

Public Health – Seattle & King County's firearm injury data and data from the community



www.kingcounty.gov/firearms

2. Identifying known risk and protective factors

- What are risk factors for perpetrating firearm violence?
 - Research carried out as part of the Shots Fired project
- What are risk factors for firearm theft or misuse?



Firearm Perpetration Study

- Several risk factors are identified in literature, but no research specific to King County
- Approach
 - Identify the strongest risk factors by comparing people who committed violent crimes with and without firearms
 - Select 208 firearm assault perpetrator cases and 738 non-firearm assault perpetrators, ages 18-29, convicted between 2006 and 2016
 - Extract data on history and system engagement from Electronic Court Records, public health data, court system data

What we found (quantitative research)

What do we know so far from studying approx. 1000 convicted cases?



Education (Middle School)

7.5 times more likely to drop out of middle school*



Previous Convictions

Ranges from **1.4 times** to **10 times** more likely to have criminal convictions*



Previous Firearm and Assault Injuries

Firearm perpetrators are **2.5 times** more likely to have sustained gun shot wound (GSW)*, **1.4 times** more for assault wound*



Drugs and Alcohol

2.5 times more likely to have used opioids and **3.4 times** more likely to have used stimulants (48 hours prior to indexed firearm perpetration)*

*(compared to non-firearm perpetrators)

Washington State firearm ownership & storage issues

- **63%** of firearm-owning households report at least one unsafely stored firearm
- Over **250,000 children** in WA State live in a household with at least 1 unsafely stored firearm
- Among older adults living in a firearm owning household, **one quarter** have at least one firearm stored unlocked and loaded



A key protective factor: storing firearms locked up

- Unintentional injury prevention
- Suicide prevention (especially for young people)
- Prevents firearms being misused by a household member in crisis
- Theft prevention (keeping firearms from being trafficked and used in violence or crime)



3. Work with those most affected to design, implement, & evaluate appropriate interventions

- Safe storage promotion
- Law enforcement partnerships
- Youth engagement



Violence & Injury Prevention staff member presenting a lock box demo

Some of our stakeholders

- Firearm owners and users
- Youth and families affected by firearm violence
- Firearm retailers
- Medical systems
- Law enforcement and prosecutors
- Policymakers

The Lock It Up program promotes voluntary safe storage of firearms.



SIMPLE. SECURE. READY.

- **Partnerships with firearm and safe storage device retailers**

Give a discount on storage devices to customers who mention the program; share information

- **Partnerships with law enforcement**

Share information with Concealed Pistol License applicants

- **Public education**

Health fairs, website, presentations, data dissemination

- **Community partnerships**

We are a resource and convener across the spectrum of gun violence prevention work

For more information: www.kingcounty.gov/lockitup

Listening to youth voice:

The Youth & Young Adult Firearm Violence Report

- Engaging with youth and young adults affected by gun violence and their families and communities
- Empowering those with lived experience of gun violence and listening to community voices
- Gathering information and making recommendations for collaborative problem-solving
- Ultimately, addressing firearm violence with community-informed strategies that work

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For more information:

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