

# How do Veterans store their firearms?

A close-up photograph of a handgun, likely a semi-automatic pistol, with a brass padlock attached to the trigger guard. The padlock is closed, and the trigger is visible through the opening of the guard. The background is dark and out of focus.

VA researchers and colleagues used data from a 2015 nationally representative sample to learn about Veterans' firearm-storage practices and attitudes. Here's part of what they learned:

**1 in 3 Veteran firearm owners** store household firearms loaded and unlocked

**1 in 20** believe that a **firearm increases household suicide risk**

**1 in 4** consider their loaded, unlocked firearm to be **inaccessible to suicidal household members**

**Conclusion:** "Storing a firearm **loaded and unlocked** is common among Veterans. ... **Suicide prevention initiatives** among Veterans should incorporate **communication strategies** that address **common misperceptions** about household firearm risk and whether safe storage practices may better align with reasons most Veterans own firearms (i.e., **safety**)—especially when someone in their home is at **increased risk for suicide.**"