

# FIREARM DEATHS IN COLORADO: CONCERNS, PERCEPTIONS, & REALITY 2023



WHAT IS THE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF DEATH INVOLVING FIREARMS IN COLORADO?

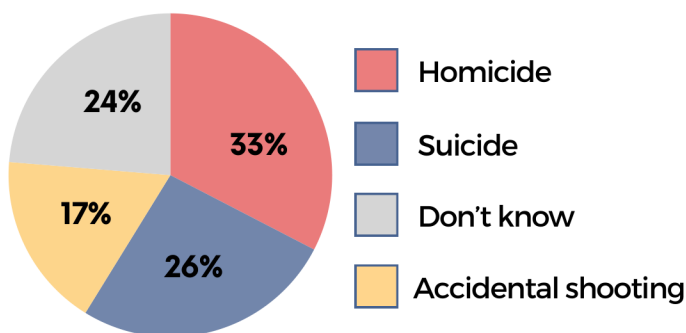
## PERCEPTION

VS

## REALITY

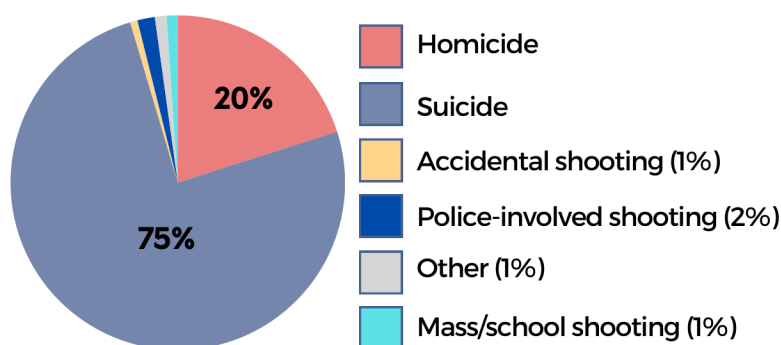
Most Colorado adults (18+) believe **homicide** is the most common cause of death involving firearms in our state...

BELIEFS AMONG COLORADO ADULTS



...**however**, the majority of firearm-involved deaths in Colorado are **suicides**.

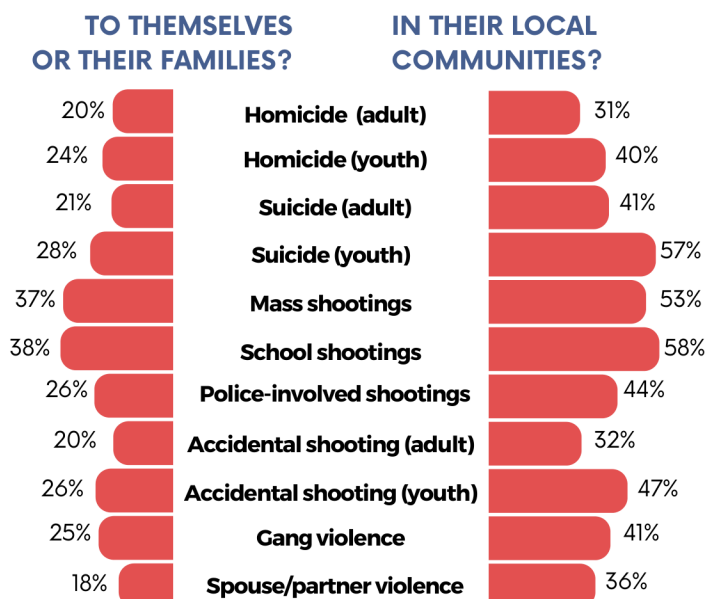
FIREARM DEATHS IN COLORADO BY INTENT (2017-2021, N=4221)<sup>1,2</sup>



## CONCERNS

Colorado adults are concerned about a variety of violent events occurring. **The event of highest concern is a school shooting.**

PERCENTAGE OF COLORADO ADULTS CONCERNED ABOUT VIOLENT EVENTS HAPPENING:



## Quick Facts

- In Colorado, the most common cause of death involving a firearm is suicide, which accounted for 75% of all firearm-involved fatalities between 2017-2021.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Between 2017-2021, only 1% of the firearm-related deaths in Colorado were due to a mass shooting or school shooting event. These events are statistically rare and occur far less often compared to other firearm-involved deaths.<sup>1,2</sup>
- These large-scale events not only directly impact individuals injured or killed but also indirectly impact families, friends, communities, and society as a whole. This indirect, often psychological impact, can be heightened by media coverage, which can make the likelihood of these events happening seem higher than statistics suggest.<sup>5</sup>

Unless otherwise noted, all data is based on findings from the 2023 Colorado Firearm Injury Prevention Survey.

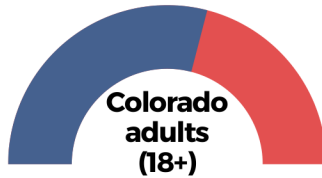
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# PERCEPTION VS REALITY



DOES ACCESS TO A FIREARM INCREASE THE RISK OF INJURY AND DEATH INVOLVING A FIREARM?

58%  
yes



42%  
no



The risk is **increased** due to the **high lethality** of firearms. Situations involving unauthorized access, substance misuse, heated arguments, or mental health crises can **quickly become fatal** if a firearm is accessible.<sup>4,5</sup>



DOES SECURELY STORING FIREARMS REDUCE THE RISK OF FIREARM INJURY AND DEATH?

88%  
yes



12%  
no



Learn more

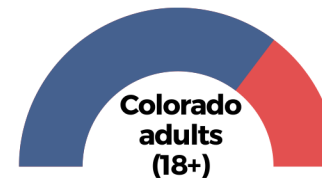


Studies among children and adults **consistently show a lower risk** of firearm injuries and deaths in homes that practice secure storage compared to those with firearms stored unlocked and/or loaded.<sup>6-8</sup>



IF SOMEONE IS IN CRISIS, DOES TEMPORARILY REMOVING FIREARMS FROM THE HOME DECREASE THE RISK OF FIREARM INJURY OR DEATH?

71%  
yes



29%  
no



Colorado Storage Map



Temporarily storing a firearm out of the home provides an **additional degree of separation** between someone in crisis and a highly lethal method of unintentional and intentional injuries.<sup>9,10</sup>

The Colorado Firearm Injury Prevention Survey (COFIPS) is a periodic anonymous, online survey that provides state-representative data on a variety of topics related to the impact and prevention of firearm-involved injury and death in Colorado.

COFIPS is conducted by the Firearm Injury Prevention Initiative at the University of Colorado School of Medicine and the Injury & Violence Prevention Center at the Colorado School of Public Health with funding from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Office of Gun Violence Prevention.



Firearm Injury  
Prevention Initiative  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Injury & Violence  
Prevention Center  
colorado school of public health



1 Colorado Violent Death Reporting System, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/center-for-health-and-environmental-data/registries-and-vital-statistics/colorado-violent-death-reporting-system>  
2 Gun Violence Archive. <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org>  
3 Lowe, S. R., & Galea, S. "The Mental Health Consequences of Mass Shootings". TVA, (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838015591572>  
4 Dahlberg, L., et al. "Guns in the home and risk of a violent death in the home: Findings from a national study". Am J Epidemiol, (2004). <https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwh309>  
5 Kellerman, A., et al. "Suicide in the Home in Relation to Gun Ownership". NEJM, (1992). <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejm199208133270705>

6 Shenassa, E. D., et al. "Safer storage of firearms at home and risk of suicide: a study of protective factors in a nationally representative sample". JECH, (2004). <https://doi.org/10.1136/jech.2003.017343>  
7 Grossman D.C., et al. "Gun Storage Practices and Risk of Youth Suicide and Unintentional Firearm Injuries". JAMA, (2005). doi:10.1001/jama.293.6.707  
8 Miller, M., et al. "Firearm storage practices and rates of unintentional firearm deaths in the United States". Accident Analysis & Prevention, (2005). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2005.02.003>  
9 Mann J.J., et al. "Suicide prevention strategies: A systematic review". JAMA Psychiatry, (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.294.16.2064>  
10 Allchin A., et al. "Limiting access to lethal means: applying the social ecological model for firearm suicide prevention". Injury Prevention, (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2018-042809>