

RESEARCH BRIEF

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HOUSEHOLD FIREARM STORAGE PRACTICES IN WA, 2013-2022

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BACKGROUND

Secure firearm storage can reduce firearm injuries and deaths from suicide and unintentional injuries and prevent firearm theft. Firearm ownership and storage practices differ by demographic groups, such as sex, veteran status, and the presence of children in the home, as well as across time. Understanding how firearm storage practices change over time and if they differ across population subgroups can inform timely and tailored public health interventions and strategies to reduce the burden of firearm-related harm. Additionally, identifying gaps in storage practices among specific groups can guide approaches to address group-specific barriers.

STUDY GOAL

This study characterized **trends in household firearm storage** from 2013 to 2022 in Washington State and across demographic groups.

APPROACH

Researchers used survey data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), an annual survey that collects information on health behaviors. Washington State included questions about household presence of a firearm and firearm storage in 2013, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022.

Researchers grouped household firearm storage as either secure or unsecured storage. This study also explored differences in storage practices by individual-level characteristics (respondent sex, age group, and veteran status) and household-level characteristics (presence of any children younger than 18 years in the household and rurality). Percentages are weighted to be representative of the adult population of Washington.

Definitions

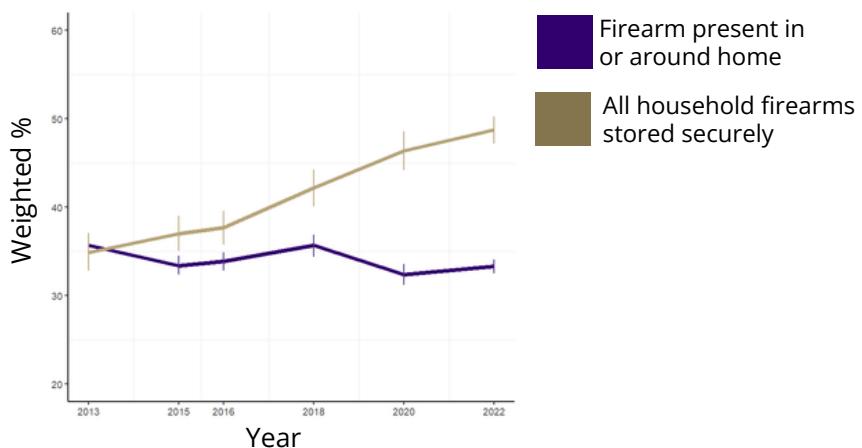
- **Secure storage:** all household firearms locked and unloaded
- **Unsecured storage:** any household firearm loaded, unlocked, or loaded and unlocked

Research conducted in partnership with

Public Health
Seattle & King County

RESULTS

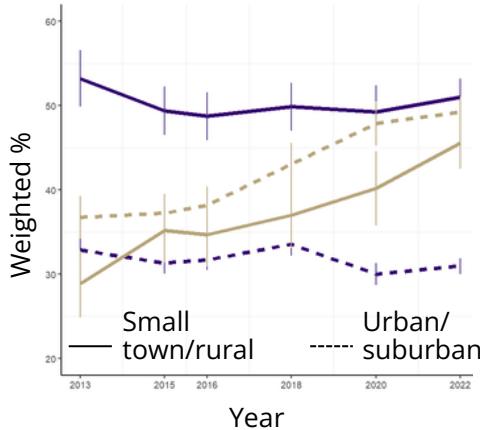
Trends in presence of a firearm in or around the home and secure storage



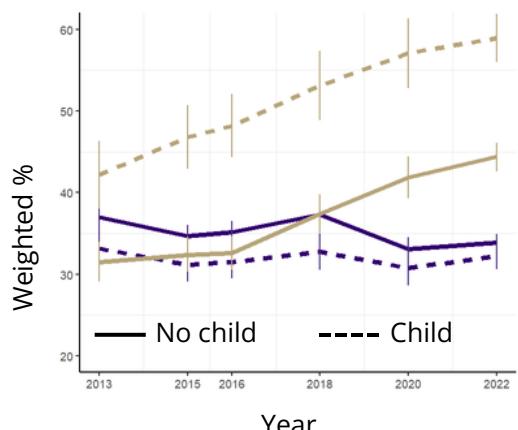
From 2013 to 2022, the odds of firearms being stored securely increased **7%** annually on average.

Secure firearm storage significantly increased among nearly all subgroups but were notably lower among rural households and higher among households with children present in the home.

By household rurality



By household presence of a child



IMPLICATIONS

This study is one of the first population-level examinations of changes in household firearm storage and provides important insights into these trends in Washington State. The percentage of households reporting secure storage increased overall during the study period, but **differences in demographic groups**, such as by age, sex, veteran status, presence of children in the home, and rurality, **persisted**. Further, **half of households still store at least one firearm unlocked and/or loaded**. Differences in secure storage practices among subgroups suggest a need to tailor interventions and messages to specific populations, incorporating their unique experiences and contexts.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, REFER TO:

Conrick KM, Banks S, Schleimer JP, Gomez A, Pallickaparambil AJ, Ta M, Rowhani-Rahbar A. Household Firearm Storage Practices. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2025;8(7): e2518960. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.18960

Additional resources available at

<https://cfip.uw.edu/tools-for-health-professionals/>

