

Resources for Federal Firearms Licenses (FFLs)

Suicide Data & Prevention

- Suicide hurts all of us, but it is preventable¹
- Being a responsible firearm owner helps keep everyone safe²
- Easy access to a firearm increases the risk of dying by suicide³
- Most people who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide,⁴ meaning **reducing access** to firearms during a crisis saves lives

In the United States

Firearms are frequently used as a means for suicide



Over half of suicides involve a firearm⁵

Quick interventions matter

71% of survivors attempted within an hour of thinking about suicide⁶

In Washington State

Suicide is the leading cause of firearm-related deaths



More than three-quarters of all firearm-related deaths are suicides⁷

Suicide is a major public health issue in Washington State

The rate of suicide is  **11%** higher than the national average⁸

Learn the Signs of Suicide^{9,10}

(Forefront Suicide Prevention)

- L** Look for signs >>>
- E** Empathize and listen
- A** Ask about suicide
- R** Reduce the risk
- N** Next steps: Seek help



- No knowledge about guns AND no interest in learning; asks no questions
- Doesn't care which gun they purchase or seem unresponsive to your questions about the purchase
- Gives unconvincing response when asked what they intend to use the gun for
- No interest in firearm maintenance or safety
- Mentions recent crisis, such as a divorce, job loss, or other setback
- Makes comments that could suggest suicidality (e.g. "I don't need a lot of ammunition, I won't have the gun for long.")
- Looks anxious, avoids eye contact
- Appears distraught (shaking, fighting back tears)

(New Hampshire Firearm Safety Coalition)

- Notify store owner or manager (if applicable) if at all uncomfortable with a prospective sale
- Urge customer with little firearm experience to seek training before buying
- Ask the customer why they want a firearm and how and where they plan to use it
- Suggest the customer take some more time to think it over before buying
- If they claim to be buying for self-defense, offer to sell pepper spray instead
- Ask person directly if they are suicidal; if yes, offer National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number (1-800-273-TALK [8255])
- Notify nearby dealers that someone you denied a sale to may go to their store; notify police
- Trust your instincts; you are under no obligation to sell a gun to anyone

This fact sheet was compiled from materials created by:

- **The Means Matter Campaign**, <https://hsph.harvard.edu/research/means-matter/>
- **The Safer Homes Coalition**, <https://saferhomescoalition.org/>
- **Each Mind Matters**, <https://emmresourcecenter.org/>
- **NH Firearm Safety Coalition**, <https://www.nhsfc.org>

View the full list of references here:

