

SUICIDE PREVENTION:

IN COLLABORATION WITH FIREARM RETAILERS



DEFENSE
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
OFFICE
www.DSPO.mil

With approximately 500 suicide deaths annually among Service members, suicide is an important public health issue.

Firearms are used more frequently in suicide than all other methods combined. During times of heightened vulnerability, safely storing firearms can make the difference between life and death.

Firearm retailers play an important role in preventing suicide.

Firearm retailers and firearm owners strongly believe in firearm safety, protecting the family, and friends-helping-friends. Nationwide, suicide prevention officials in over 20 states are implementing collaborative programs with firearm retailers to prevent suicide.

Firearm Retailer Toolkit

The Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) created this toolkit to empower Suicide Prevention Program Managers to take action.

Suicide prevention officials and firearm retailers can keep our military community safe by encouraging Service members and their families to secure firearms safely.

Our hope is that these resources help you develop strong collaborations with firearm retailers to disseminate suicide prevention information and make safe firearm storage the norm in our community.

Materials in this toolkit include:

▶ **Firearm Retail Store Staff Brochure:**

Includes information for firearm retail store employees on the importance of firearm safety for suicide prevention, how to participate in this effort, and where to direct individuals experiencing a suicidal crisis or life challenge.



▶ **Customer Brochure:**

Emphasizes the importance of safe storage, describes warning signs of suicide, and provides safe storage tips and contact information for crisis and non-crisis resources.

▶ **Firearm Retail Store Poster:**

Describes safe storage options, and crisis resource information.

How to Use this Toolkit

Suicide Prevention Program Managers and other stakeholders can use this toolkit to establish collaborative relationships with firearm retailers, including staff in private retail stores and at military exchanges, on and off installation.

DSPO identified the following best practices for working with firearm retailers to promote safe storage practices within the community.

- 1** Familiarize yourself with the lethal means safety and safe messaging resources at www.dspo.mil, such as the Lethal Means Safety Guide for Military Service Members and Their Families, Prevention of Suicide by Firearm: A Communication Guide for Military Leaders and Support Providers and the Leaders Suicide Prevention Safe Messaging Guide, so you can educate firearm retailers.
- 2** Reach out to local firearm retail stores to seek their collaboration for suicide prevention. Be prepared to listen to retailers about their concerns, address suicide misconceptions, and discuss the benefits of safe storage.
- 3** Finalize the brochures and posters by adding in contact information for local crisis resources and installation counseling, mental health services, and/or other resources.



- 4** Provide retailers with enough brochures and posters to stock their stores and offer suggestions on where to place the customer brochures and posters. Heavily trafficked and highly visible areas (e.g., near a display case or at the check-out counter) are best.
- 5** Solicit feedback from firearm retailers, staff, and Service members to improve the toolkit.

Any actions taken by the retailer are voluntary and do not incur any commitment or obligation to the U.S. Department of Defense.

For non-crisis help, like for relationship or financial challenges, call Military OneSource.

**MILITARY
ONE
SOURCE**

Call. 800-342-9647
Click. www.MilitaryOneSource.mil
Connect. 24/7

Service members, veterans, and their family members can call the Veterans/Military Crisis Line, available 24/7, if they are experiencing a suicidal crisis.



Call from overseas:

In Europe:

Call 00800 1273 8255 or DSN 118

In Korea:

Call 0808 555 118 or DSN 118

Or Text "TALK" to the Crisis Line at 741-741

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24/7. Call 800-273-TALK (8255).

