

MAINE SAFER HOMES TASKFORCE

The Maine Safer Home Taskforce (MSHT) was formed, to endorse a public health approach to combat the issue of Maine's veterans' suicide rate, which is the highest in the northeast.

Members include: Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services, Department of Public Safety, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness, Veteran of Foreign Wars, Veterans Benefits Administration, American Legion, VA Maine Healthcare System, Maine Vet Centers, Maine Center for Disease Control, and the Maine Army National Guard Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention Team.

By utilizing the strong safety culture that already exists within the firearms community in Maine, the MSHT seeks to promote gun safety education, mental health resources, and practical off-site firearms and medication storage solutions with family, friends, other veterans, or law enforcement.



WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT

If a family member or friend is going through a rough time, such as alcohol or substance misuse, divorce or break-up, or major stress, make sure they are safe from guns and medications.

As a community, let us
LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND.



Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services
207-287-7020 | mainebvs@maine.gov



FIREARMS & MEDICATIONS SAFETY



OWNING & HANDLING A GUN

TREAT EVERY FIREARM AS IF IT WERE LOADED



1. Never handle firearms while under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Guns and impairment are never a good mix. In Maine, it's against the law to use a firearm under the influence of alcohol, any other drug or a controlled substance.

2. Seek proper training

Attend a reputable firearms safety handling course or seek private instructions before attempting to use a firearm. Know how to safely operate and maintain your firearm before shooting. Learn the specifics of each gun before you handle, shoot or clean it.

3. Wear ear and eye protection

Shooting without protection will likely cause long term injury.

4. Use only the correct ammunition for your gun

Understand what ammunition your gun requires and use only the appropriate size and type.

5. Be sure of your target and what is beyond

Be sure you know the target. If there is any doubt, don't shoot. Also, if you don't have a backstop, be sure you know where the shot will go if it goes beyond your target.

6. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction

Be aware of the direction the firearm is pointed. Only point at things you intend to shoot.

7. Keep finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot

Finger should never rest on the trigger unless in the deliberate act of shooting. Your trigger finger should be extended, pointing forward, pressed against the side of the gun and outside the trigger guard.

8. Be sure that your firearm is safe to operate

Always verify that the firearm is unloaded and that the muzzle is clear of obstruction.

9. Safely store guns to prevent unauthorized access

Store all firearms unloaded and locked when not in use. Lock ammunition in a separate location. Ensure household members who shouldn't have unsupervised access (children and teens, adults at risk for suicide or other misuse) don't know the combination to the locks or where the keys are.

10. Consider additional safety precautions if a family member may be suicidal

When someone is going through a crisis (such as a breakup, job loss, legal issues) and/or has a major change in their behavior (depression, violence, lack of selfcare, sleeplessness or heavy drinking or drug use), temporarily storing firearms or medication away from the home for a while may save their life.

