

SAFE USE STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF MEDICATIONS

Medicines can be as dangerous and addictive as street drugs when misused.

SAFE USE

- Take medication only prescribed to you and only as prescribed.
- Never share medication with others.

SAFE STORAGE

- Store all medication in an inaccessible secure place, or a locked container.
- Keep track of each type and amount of your medications.

SAFE DISPOSAL

- Dispose of unneeded and outdated medications by using your community's medicine drop box.
- To find your nearest location, visit <https://disposemymeds.org/>
- Be sure to use a Drug Disposal Pouch provided by your local health department or pharmacy for safe medication disposal.



VA CENTER FOR WOMEN VETERANS

Call or text 1-855-829-6636

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

(800) 273-TALK (8255)

VETERANS CRISIS LINE

(800) 273-TALK PRESS 1 or Text 838255

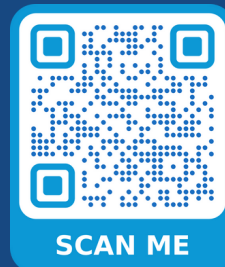
CRISIS TEXT LINE

Text "Hope4SC" to 741741

SC HOPES

(844) SC-HOPES (724-6737)

Visit our website at scdva.sc.gov or scan the QR code for additional information and resources.



SUICIDE PREVENTION INITIATIVE



LOCK IT SOUTH CAROLINA

Lock It South Carolina was developed in June 2024 as a suicide prevention initiative with the South Carolina Department of Veterans' Affairs and the SC Governor's Challenge Team.

Promoting safe and responsible care of Lethal Means, including firearms and medications and encouraging community conversations about mental wellness are key components to preventing suicides.

Increasing the **time and distance** between someone in a suicide crisis and access to lethal means can reduce suicide risk and save lives.



KEY COMPONENTS



Limiting access to lethal means for a person in crisis helps prevent suicide



Helping to educate personnel that take a gun lock on why it's important to use them matters



Safe handling and secure storage of lethal means at home is encouraged



Proper disposal of unwanted medication and keeping medications away from children

HOW TO APPROACH A CONVERSATION ABOUT FIREARM SAFETY

Having a conversation with a Veteran about firearm safety can be challenging. As someone who likely had some level of firearm training during their military service, the Veteran may not be receptive to talking about best practices for gun storage and security.

It can be helpful to frame your conversation around the safety of others-- family, friends, or children who may not know how to properly handle a firearm or understand its dangers, which could result in accidental injury or death.



FIREARM SAFETY

Nearly half of all Veterans own a firearm, and most Veteran firearm owners are dedicated to firearm safety. This can be attributed to the firearm training that they learned during their military service. Safe firearm storage practices can save a life by increasing the amount of time and space between the suicidal impulse and access to a firearm.

- **Keep firearms unloaded and locked** when not in use to prevent children and/or unauthorized adults from accessing them
- **Store ammunition separately from firearms** and out of the reach of children and unauthorized adults
- **Request a gunlock** from the SC Department of Veterans' Affairs, your local County Veterans' Affairs Office, police department, or your local U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs Suicide Prevention Program
- **If a member of your family is going through a challenging time and is at increased risk of suicide**, the safest option for any household firearms is to store them away from home until the person has recovered

Keep the "safe" in firearm safety

Hiding a gun is not enough! Kids are curious, and studies show they usually know where a family keeps a gun.

Gun safes can lower the risk a curious child will be hurt:



Safe or lockbox for handguns



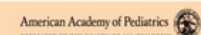
Locked gun safe for rifles



Gun trigger locks— inexpensive and effective



Lock box for ammo



* At a minimum, all firearms should be stored, unloaded, and locked in a gun safe, cabinet, or storage case when not in use. Off-site storage may be advisable if there are concerns about the well-being of a Veteran or family members.