

Gun Safety in the Home

The majority of all firearm accidents in the home could be prevented by taking a few simple precautions and using proper storage. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the following are the **Top Ten Gun Safety Tips**:

1. Always keep the firearm's muzzle pointed in a safe direction. A "safe direction" means that the gun is pointed so that even if an accidental discharge occurred, it would not result in injury.
2. Always keep your finger off the trigger until you actually intend to shoot. When handling a gun, rest your finger outside the trigger guard or along the side of the gun. Don't touch the trigger until you are actually ready to fire.
3. Firearms should be unloaded when not actually in use. Whenever you pick up a gun, such as when removing it from or returning it to storage, remember to point it in a safe direction and make sure it is unloaded.
4. Be sure you know how your firearm operates: read the manual on your firearm, know how to open and close the action of the firearm safely and know how to remove any ammunition from the firearm and its magazine safely.
5. Store your firearms in a locked cabinet, safe, gun vault, or storage case when not in use, ensuring they are in a location inaccessible by children and cannot be handled by anyone without your permission.
6. Store your ammunition in a locked location separate from firearms.
7. Use a gun locking device that renders the firearm inoperable when not in use. A gun lock should be used as an additional safety precaution and not as a substitute for secure storage.
8. Make sure that young people in your home are aware of and understand the safety guidelines concerning firearms. Have them sign the Project ChildSafe Pledge for young people (available at www.projectchildsafes.com), a reminder that if they find an unattended firearm in their home or a neighbor's not to touch it, and tell an adult.
9. Always unload, clean, and place your firearms in a secure storage location immediately after returning from a hunting trip or a day at the range.
10. Educate everyone in your family about firearms safety. Visit the Project ChildSafe website for safety information and to find out where to get a free safety kit in your area. **(FREE GUN LOCKS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ROCKPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT)**

In addition, if you should choose to keep a firearm for home defense, in other words loaded and ready, make sure it is readily available to you, but inaccessible or inoperable to anyone else. There are several special gun cases on the market today that can be quickly opened by only the authorized user or users in the case of an emergency.

Just remember, all gun owners have the responsibility to make a safe environment for themselves, their families, and their community when it comes to their firearms.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the use or safe storage of your firearms, please feel free to contact the Rockport Police Department. We have officers available around the clock that would be more than happy to discuss firearm use and safety within your home.

Source: Nathan Garcia, City of Rockport Police Department