

NC S.A.F.E.— Evidence of Impact and Benefits of Continued Funding to Increase Safe Firearm Storage



The NC Secure All Firearms Effectively (S.A.F.E.) campaign is changing firearm owners' beliefs and intentions—important first steps toward storing firearms more safely.

In a survey of NC adults who own firearms, people who remembered seeing at least one NC S.A.F.E. ad were more likely than those who didn't to:



Agree with messages related to NC S.A.F.E. (for example, "An unlocked gun is a tragedy waiting to happen" and "Gun deaths among children and youth are on the rise").



Report that they intended to store their firearms safely (stating, for example, "I will lock up my gun(s) in my car or truck").



Sustained and increased investment in the campaign would allow these early gains to translate into longer-term behavior change and injury prevention.

Why Safe Storage Matters



118 NC children were killed by firearms

in 2021, making firearms the #1 cause of deaths due to injury that year.



Nearly half (42%) of NC adults

have a firearm in or around the home. More than 50% of loaded firearms are stored unlocked.



10,876 firearms were stolen by criminals annually

from private citizens in NC between 2021 and 2024.



Research shows that

safe firearm storage significantly lowers the risk of suicide and unintentional injury in the home.



In June 2023, the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NC DPS) launched the NC S.A.F.E. public education media campaign to promote safe gun storage in homes and vehicles. The campaign's goal is to reduce unauthorized access, gun thefts, and firearm-related injuries. NC DPS has partnered with RTI International to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the campaign, including its influence on beliefs, intentions, and behaviors related to safe gun storage.



For more resources and information on safe firearms storage, scan the QR code or visit

ncsafe.org

NC S.A.F.E.
Secure All Firearms Effectively

Evidence of Progress Across Outcomes

Findings are based on a two-wave survey conducted in 2025 among adult firearm owners in North Carolina, allowing comparison of outcomes over time and by campaign exposure.

There was increased awareness of safe firearm storage and NC S.A.F.E. messaging.

There was a meaningful shift in attitudes and beliefs about the risks of unsafe firearm storage.

There was movement toward safer firearm storage intentions.

SHORT-TERM

INTERMEDIATE

LONG-TERM

Over half (**58.8%**) of respondents recalled having seen at least one campaign advertisement in the past 3 months.

Among campaign-exposed NC gun owners, average agreement with campaign-related safe storage beliefs reached **75%**.

From Wave 1 to Wave 2, there was a nearly **26-fold increase** in intent to secure firearms to prevent unintentional child injury among campaign-exposed respondents.

"My family personally, my mom, I would like to send [the ad] her way just because I know that not everyone stays on top of gun safety and gun storage. So yeah, I think it would be great to show my family it is your responsibility. It is your responsibility if something tragic were to happen."

- North Carolina gun owner

Why Continued Funding Matters

These findings show the campaign is working where behavior change begins: in beliefs, attitudes, and intentions. With continued and expanded funding, NC S.A.F.E. can:



Strengthen campaign exposure, so belief and attitude changes are reinforced.



Expand outreach to more communities across the state.



Assess long-term impact by tracking how intentions evolve into behavior change.



Maximize the return on the state's investment by scaling an approach that has already demonstrated measurable results.



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