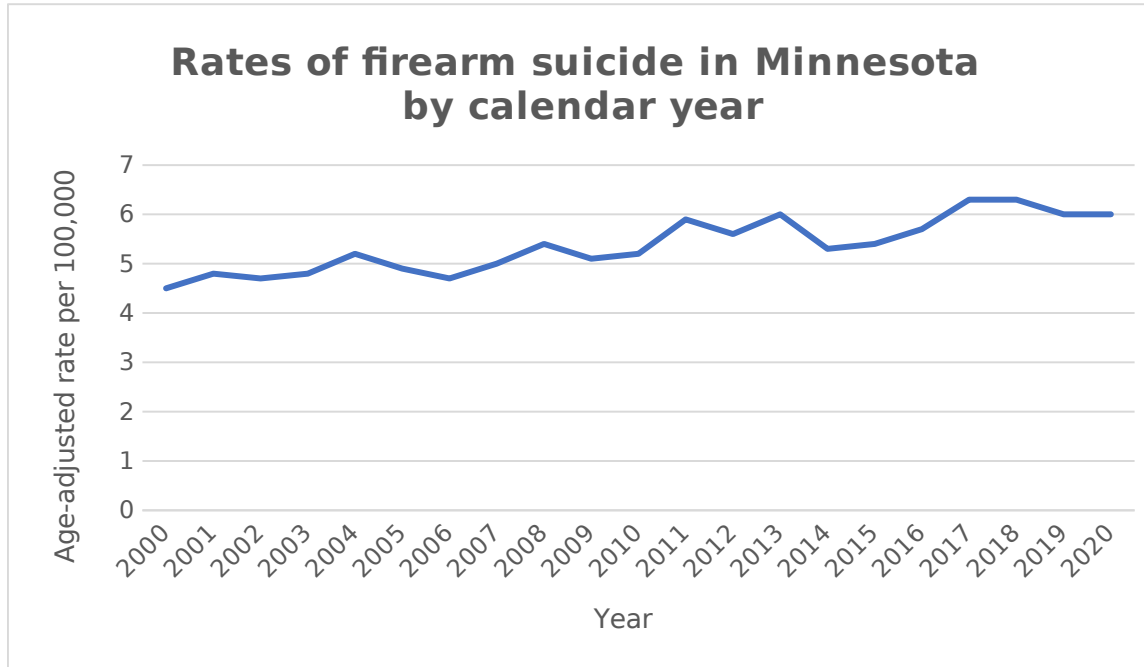


Firearm Suicide in Minnesota: The Facts and How You Can Help

Firearm suicide is a public health crisis.¹ There were [more than 24,000 firearm suicides](#) in the United States in 2020²; the United States has the [highest rate of firearm suicide](#) of all nations.³ In Minnesota in 2020, there were [354 firearm suicides](#) or nearly one per day.² This amounts to 69% of firearm deaths being attributable to suicide in Minnesota.² As shown in the Figure, Minnesota's firearm suicide rate has [steadily increased](#) over the past two decades.²



Statistics to know:

In 2020, [83% of firearm suicides](#) in Minnesota were among non-Hispanic white males.²

[Minnesotans over the age of 75](#) are at increased risk.²

The age-adjusted firearm suicide rate among residents of Minnesota's most rural counties is [more than twice that](#) of residents of the most urban counties*; however, due to their large populations, Hennepin and Ramsey counties accounted for 22% of Minnesota firearm suicide deaths in 2020.²

In the United States, nearly 90% of suicidal acts with a firearm are [fatal](#), compared to less than 10% of suicidal acts overall.⁴ (Thus, firearms are used in less than 5% of all suicide attempts but in more than 50% of fatal suicide attempts.⁴) Suicidal crises are often [self-limiting](#), suicide attempts are often [impulsive acts](#), and [the vast majority](#) (90%) of those who survive such an attempt do not subsequently die by suicide.^{5,6} Thus, reducing access to this lethal method of suicide [saves lives](#).⁶ In fact, an association between access to firearms and an increased risk of suicide has been observed in [every study](#) of this topic conducted within the United States.⁶

* From the 2013 NCHS Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for Counties; data are from 2020.

How you can help save lives:

Practice safe firearm storage. All firearms within a home should be [stored](#) locked and unloaded, and ammunition should be stored and locked separately.^{7,8} Studies indicate that these practices [reduce the risk of firearm suicide](#).⁷ For individuals at increased risk of suicide, offsite storage of firearms may be the [safest approach](#).⁸ There are many [resources](#) available that present options for storage, both within and outside the home.⁸

Know the warning signs of suicide and take immediate action if need be.⁹

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE:

The behaviors listed below may be some of the signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

TALKING ABOUT:



- ▷ Wanting to die
- ▷ Great guilt or shame
- ▷ Being a burden to others

FEELING:



- ▷ Empty, hopeless, trapped, or having no reason to live
- ▷ Extremely sad, more anxious, agitated, or full of rage
- ▷ Unbearable emotional or physical pain

CHANGING BEHAVIOR, SUCH AS:



- ▷ Making a plan or researching ways to die
- ▷ Withdrawing from friends, saying good bye, giving away important items, or making a will
- ▷ Taking dangerous risks such as driving extremely fast
- ▷ Displaying extreme mood swings
- ▷ Eating or sleeping more or less
- ▷ Using drugs or alcohol more often

If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has increased recently.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK

Crisis Text Line
Text "HELLO" to 741741

  National Institute of Mental Health

www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention

NIMH Identifier No. OM 19-4316

Advocate for commonsense gun policies that play an important role in reducing firearm suicide rates.

- [Proposed comprehensive firearm safety legislation](#) in Minnesota would (among other provisions) require a license to obtain, possess, or carry a firearm, which would in turn require a require a background check, liability insurance, and training.¹⁰ Implementation of a licensing law in Connecticut was associated with a [33% reduction in firearm suicide rates](#), whereas repeal of Missouri's licensing law was associated with a [24% increase](#).¹¹
- [Proposed extreme risk legislation](#) in Minnesota would provide a mechanism for appropriate parties to petition a court to temporarily limit firearm access among individuals who pose a risk to themselves or others.¹² Studies from [Connecticut](#)

and [Indiana](#) indicate that extreme risk laws are associated with reductions in firearm suicides.¹³⁻¹⁵

- Examples of action steps include:
 - Contacting one's Minnesota legislators to express support for such measures
 - Writing a letter to the editor of one's local newspaper
 - Advocating for [federal policies](#)¹⁶ that would reduce rates of firearm suicide and other forms of gun violence

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