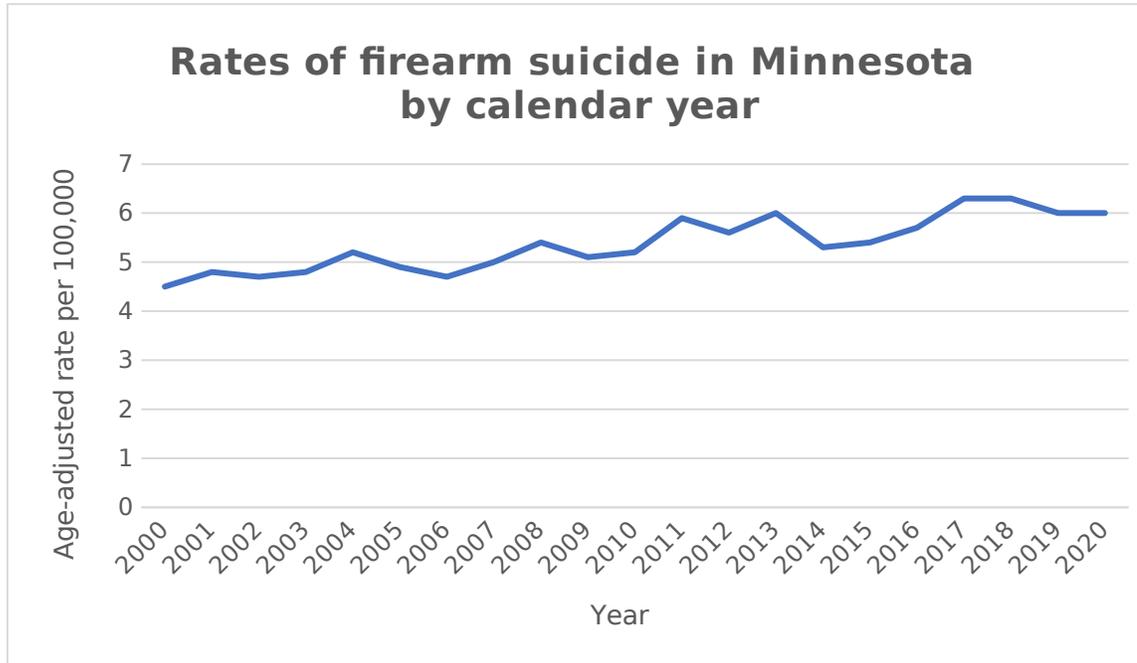


# Firearm Suicide in Minnesota: The Facts and How You Can Help

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



## Statistics to know:

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

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

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.<sup>2</sup>

In the United States, nearly 90% of suicidal acts with a firearm are [fatal](#), compared to less than 10% of suicidal acts overall.<sup>4</sup> (Thus, firearms are used in less than 5% of all suicide attempts but in more than 50% of fatal suicide attempts.<sup>4</sup>) 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.<sup>5,6</sup> Thus, reducing access to this lethal method of suicide [saves lives](#).<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

\* 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.<sup>7,8</sup> Studies indicate that these practices [reduce the risk of firearm suicide](#).<sup>7</sup> For individuals at increased risk of suicide, offsite storage of firearms may be the [safest approach](#).<sup>8</sup> There are many [resources](#) available that present options for storage, both within and outside the home.<sup>8</sup>

**Know the warning signs of suicide and take immediate action if need be.**<sup>9</sup>

## WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE:

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

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**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

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**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](http://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.<sup>10</sup> 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](#).<sup>11</sup>
- [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.<sup>12</sup> Studies from [Connecticut](#)

and [Indiana](#) indicate that extreme risk laws are associated with reductions in firearm suicides.<sup>13-15</sup>

- 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](#)<sup>16</sup> that would reduce rates of firearm suicide and other forms of gun violence

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