



Waiting Periods for Firearms Purchases

OVERVIEW

Under current federal law, there is no waiting period requirement for the purchase of guns. Waiting period laws give law enforcement additional time to perform an accurate background check and create a “cooling off” period to prevent acts of violence or suicide attempts. If sold from a federally licensed dealer, a gun can be transferred to a purchaser before a proper background check is performed. However, the laws do not apply to private dealers in states that do not require universal background checks.

Waiting periods can reduce the number of prohibited people from purchasing guns, along with those who purchase a firearm with the intent of suicide. Waiting periods are an under-utilized, evidence-based strategy for reducing death and injuries.

AAP POSITION

- The AAP is committed to protecting children from firearm-related injury and violence.
- The absence of guns in home and communities is the most reliable and effective measure to prevent firearm-related injuries in children and adolescents.
- The AAP supports a number of specific measures to reduce the destructive effects of guns in the lives of children and adolescents, including the manufacture, sale, purchase, ownership, storage, and use of firearms.
- Other measures aimed at regulating the access of guns should include mandatory waiting periods, closure of the gun show loophole, and mental health restrictions for gun purchasers.

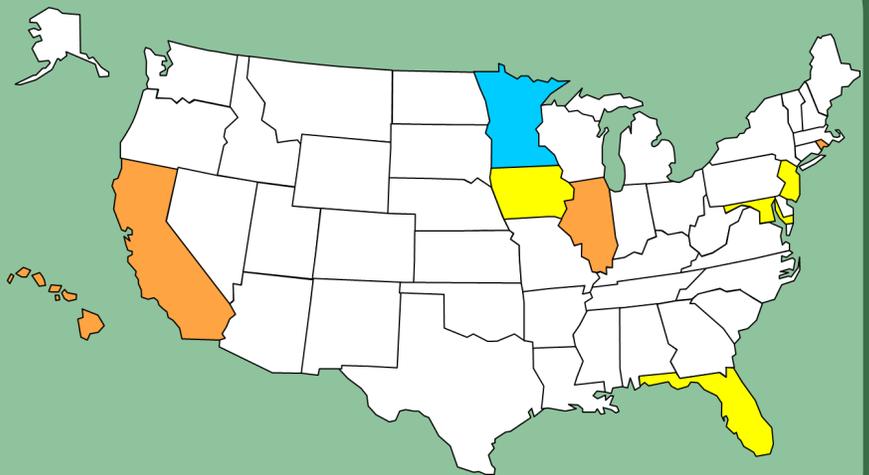
FACTS

- Death from firearms remains the most lethal form of suicide with an approximate 90% mortality rate.
- According to several studies, suicide survivors contemplated their actions in a very brief window of time. Waiting periods could help address this period of impulsive behaviors.
- Waiting period laws have proven to lower the rates of suicide. States with such laws had 51% fewer firearm suicides than states without. Another study showed that these states also experienced a 17% decrease in gun homicides. Over 900 firearm homicides could be prevented each year if every state implemented waiting periods.
- Over 70% of Americans without a firearm in the home support longer waiting periods for gun purchases.

PROGRESS

- 4 states and DC- impose waiting periods for purchases of all firearms 
- 1 state- imposes waiting periods for purchases of handguns & assault weapons 
- 4 states- impose waiting periods for handguns only 

For information on current law or pending legislation in your state, please contact AAP State Advocacy at stgov@aap.org.



MORE

- [AAP Policy–Firearm-Related Injuries in the Pediatric Population](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/5/e1416.full) – <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/5/e1416.full>
- [AAP State Advocacy–State Gun Safety Laws](http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/state-advocacy/Documents/GunSafetyLaws.pdf) – <http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/state-advocacy/Documents/GunSafetyLaws.pdf>
- [Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence](http://www.bradycampaign.org) – www.bradycampaign.org
- [Everytown for Gun Safety](http://www.everytown.org) – www.everytown.org
- [Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](http://lawcenter.giffords.org/) – <http://lawcenter.giffords.org/>
- [Children’s Defense Fund \(CDF\)–Protect Children, Not Guns](https://www.childrensdefense.org/policy/policy-priorities/gun-violence-prevention/) – <https://www.childrensdefense.org/policy/policy-priorities/gun-violence-prevention/>