

August's crime prevention newsletter will focus on firearm safety and best practices. Due to the uncharacteristically high number of shots fired incidents throughout the city of Seattle in 2017, I thought it would be helpful to provide some important firearm safety practices. Many firearms used in crimes are stolen and as such, the first important topic under the general theme of firearm safety is safe storage.

As a firearm owner, is it their responsibility to ensure that guns in their home are always stored where they are inaccessible to children or other unauthorized persons. Never leave a firearm in your vehicle unattended and always store firearms safely in your home. Safe storage is employing precautions and multiple safeguards that provide an additional barrier against unauthorized use. Guidelines for safe storage include: unloaded firearms should be stored in a locked cabinet, safe, gun vault or storage case, gun locking devices render firearms inoperable, if firearms are disassembled- parts should be securely stored in separate locations, ammunition should be stored in a locked location separate from firearms and thoroughly double check firearms to confirm they are unloaded anytime they are removed from storage. The choice to keep a firearm in your home for sporting purposes, a collection or for self-protection is a serious responsibility. Gun owners must be committed to obtaining the appropriate training and have a clear understanding of safe handling and storage rules to achieve the intended personal safety benefits.

The next general topic under firearm safety is safe handling. It is often said that there are four cardinal rules of firearm handling. These four rules are: (1) always treat every firearm as though it is loaded, (2) always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction, (3) keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot, and (4) always be sure of your target and what is in front of it and behind it (when safely shooting at a range). Nearly all firearm accidents in the home can be prevented simply by always handling firearms using these four rules and by making sure that guns are kept unloaded and locked up, with ammunition secured in a separate location.

A few other important things to remember about firearms involve record keeping and immediate reporting. When a firearm is purchased, it is crucial that the new owner records the serial number(s) and keeps these records in a safe place. In the unfortunate situation that your firearm is lost or stolen, it is absolutely imperative that you report this to the police **immediately** by calling 911! When reporting, be sure to state where the firearm was lost/stolen, when this happened, what type of firearm it is and provide law enforcement with the serial number(s).

The last thing I will provide is suggestion for two firearm related situations- what to do if you hear gunshots and what to do if you find a firearm unattended. It is important to quickly be able to distinguish gunfire from other less lethal sounds. The faster you can identify the sound, the faster you can respond. If you hear gunshots- stay calm, get to a safe place, immediately call 911 and provide the call-taker with as much information as possible. If you find a firearm- call 911 immediately and inform them you found an unattended firearm, **DO NOT TOUCH** the firearm and wait with the firearm until police arrive. Please remember to follow all instructions given to you by the call-taker and the responding police officers.

Below you will find my contact information, including email and phone numbers. Please feel free to contact me with questions, concerns and/or to request my presence at a future meeting. I would be happy to provide a presentation on firearm safety and violence prevention upon request. In the next month, the SW Precinct will have free firearm cable locks available to encourage safe storage, please contact me directly if you are interested.

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Upcoming events in SW Precinct-

- National Night Out Against Crime
 - Tuesday August 1st, various locations throughout the precinct
- SW Precinct Annual Community Picnic
 - Saturday August 12th, Delridge Community Center (4501 Delridge Way SW), 11am- 3pm

Other resources-

- Seattle Police Department's Website: <http://www.seattle.gov/police/>
- Seattle Police Department Non-Emergency Number: (206) 625-5011
- Contact information for other SPD Crime Prevention Coordinators:
 - North Precinct- Mary Amberg- Mary.Amberg@seattle.gov
 - East Precinct- Felicia Cross- Felicia.Cross@seattle.gov
 - West Precinct- Terrie Johnston- Terrie.Johnston@seattle.gov
 - South Precinct- Mark Solomon- Mark.Solomon@seattle.gov

Resources on firearm education and safety-

- www.projectchildsafes.org
- <https://gunsafetyrules.nra.org>
- www.hunter-ed.com/gun-safety/
- www.atg.wa.gov/firearms-faq
- <https://smartgunlaws.org>
- www.nssf.org