Media Toolkit

About NC S.A.F.E.

There is an urgent need for North Carolinians to safely secure their firearms in order to decrease childhood deaths, decrease firearm thefts, and increase the safety of homes and communities. [NC S.A.F.E.](http://ncsafe.org/) (Secure All Firearms Effectively) is a statewide initiative — sponsored by the N.C. Department of Public Safety — to raise awareness of the importance of safe firearm storage. Established in 2023, the program provides resources on best practices for firearm storage and safety. NC S.A.F.E. is not associated with any advocacy-based initiatives related to gun laws or regulations.

*A person wearing glasses and a suit

Description automatically generated with medium confidence*NC S.A.F.E. Spokesperson

William L. Lassiter, an expert on school safety, is the primary spokesperson for NC S.A.F.E. North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper appointed him chair of the N.C. Task Force for Safer Schools in October 2019. Lassiter has been featured on major news networks and in national publications, including CNN, Fox News, BBC, USA Today, the Los Angeles Times, and the New York Times.  
*William L. Lassiter, Deputy Secretary, Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, North Carolina Department of Public Safety*

Media Contact

To speak with a member of our media relations team, please email: [ncsafe@ncdpcs.gov](mailto:ncsafe@ncdpcs.gov).

Recorded Responses Available

The North Carolina Department of Public Safety has included [prerecorded responses](https://reingoldinc-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/kstone_reingold_com/Ebu-KyIekVRLo3V7qOvkg5YBI4z35VUtV19pe7yL5tLhzA?e=BEN1OT) for North Carolina media outlets to use in lieu of securing an interview with the deputy secretary. Questions include:

* Tell us more about NC S.A.F.E.
* Why was the NC S.A.F.E. campaign developed?
* What do you hope North Carolinians will learn from this initiative?
* Why is safe firearm storage so important?

Key Facts and Statistics

*Death and Injury*

* On average, over 1,600 people a year die by firearms in North Carolina.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* Firearms are now the **leading cause of injury-related death for children and youth** in North Carolina.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* Areas that require safe storage report a drop of up to 59% in unintentional deaths related to firearms.2
* An estimated 32% of youth firearm suicides and unintentional firearm deaths could be prevented through safe storage.2

***Vehicle Theft***

* Guns are stolen from cars at triple the rate they were 10 years ago.3
* More than **2,500 guns were stolen from vehicles** across North Carolina in 2022.4
* North Carolina has **10 of the top 100 U.S. cities for reports of gun thefts** from vehicles.4
* In Charlotte, guns are stolen from vehicles at a rate of one every eight hours.5

***Guns in the Home***

* About 35% of North Carolina adults live in a household with a firearm.6
* Some parents believe that simply hiding their guns will prevent children from accessing them. However, 75% of children who live in homes with guns know where the guns are stored.7
* Studies have found that most children will handle a gun if they find one, even if they have been taught not to.7

Graphics, Flyers, Videos, and Photos for Media Use

* [Safe Storage Options Flyer](https://ncsafe.org/assets/visuals/placeholders/downloadable-materials/nc-safe-storage-options.pdf)
* [Safe Storage Checklist](https://ncsafe.org/assets/visuals/placeholders/downloadable-materials/nc-safe-safety-checklist.pdf)
* [Flyer for Parents](https://ncsafe.org/assets/visuals/placeholders/downloadable-materials/nc-safe-parent-flyer.pdf)
* [Shareable Graphics and Social Media Posts (folder download)](https://www.ncsafe.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/nc-safe-shareable-social-media_2024_english.zip)
* [Photo Bank (large folder download)](https://ncsafe.org/assets/visuals/placeholders/downloadable-materials/nc-safe-photo-bank.zip)
* [NC S.A.F.E. Logos (folder download)](https://www.ncsafe.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/nc-safe-logos.zip)

In the News

***[As more people carry guns, thieves steal with ease — adding weapons to NC streets (News-Observer)](https://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/article266886886.html)***Oct 2022 – Police report that higher numbers of guns are getting stolen as more owners leave them in vehicles, sometimes unlocked.

[***Youth suicides in N.C. hit 2-decade high in 2021, report finds (Spectrum News – Raleigh)***](https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nc/charlotte/news/2023/03/08/child-fatality-report)  
Mar 2023 – Guns were used in more than 70% of child suicides and homicides. Those rates increased rapidly over the past two years, breaking with the national average.

[***Governor Cooper announces the first statewide Office of Violence Prevention in the South (WLOS – Asheville)***](https://wlos.com/news/local/governor-cooper-violence-prevention-south-statewide-department-public-safety-violent-crime-gun-injries-death)Mar 2023 – Gov. Roy Cooper signed an executive order creating an Office of Violence Prevention within the Department of Public Safety.

[***Thousands of guns are stolen from unlocked cars as violent crime in Charlotte rises (WBTV – Charlotte)***](https://www.wbtv.com/2023/04/17/thousands-guns-are-stolen-unlocked-cars-violent-crime-charlotte-rises/)Apr 2023 – While hundreds of guns are stolen from gun shops every year in North Carolina, thousands of guns are reported stolen from vehicles.

[***Unlocked cars contribute to a high rise in gun cases among juveniles (WRAL – Raleigh)***](https://www.wral.com/story/unlocked-cars-contribute-to-a-high-rise-in-gun-cases-among-juveniles/20817089/)Apr 2023 – The number of stolen gun cases is on the rise, and many of these weapons are getting into the hands of juveniles, according to law enforcement.

[***Wilmington police reminding residents to lock cars, over 60 guns stolen from vehicles so far this year (WECT – Wilmington)***](https://www.wect.com/2023/10/09/wilmington-police-reminding-residents-lock-cars-over-60-guns-stolen-vehicles-so-far-this-year/)  
Oct 2023 – “WPD wants to urge citizens to ensure their cars are locked to prevent theft,” Wilmington Police Department says.

[***Gun access, rural residency are key risk factors in N.C. suicide crisis (NC Health News)***](https://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2024/02/29/risk-factors-in-nc-suicide-crisis/)Feb 2024 – Suicide is the third leading cause of death among people age 18–35 in North Carolina, surpassed only by motor vehicle accidents and unintentional drug overdoses.

[***Durham County sheriff seized 200+ guns in 2023, stolen firearms remain top issue (WNCN – Raleigh)***](https://www.cbs17.com/news/local-news/durham-county-news/durham-county-sheriff-seized-200-guns-in-2023-stolen-firearms-remain-top-issue/)  
Feb 2024 – “Firearms being stolen from unsecured motor vehicles remain a challenge and our Patrol Units continue seizing weapons off the streets connected to various criminal activity,” sheriff reports.

1. [EveryStat](https://everystat.org/?_gl=1*45s8e4*_ga*MTM5Nzk0MzM0OS4xNjc1OTU4Nzc1*_ga_LT0FWV3EK3*MTY#NorthCarolina) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [NC DHHS](https://www.ncdhhs.gov/public-health-approaches-reduce-violence-and-firearm-misuse-leading-injury-and-death/open)

   3 [AP News](https://apnews.com/article/stolen-guns-cars-crime-fbi-data-66316ff1933dad8df984803fca377775)

   4 [FBI Data](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/everytown.research/viz/shared/T3NQJCRNB)

   5 [WBTV](https://www.wbtv.com/2023/04/17/thousands-guns-are-stolen-unlocked-cars-violent-crime-charlotte-rises/)

   6 [Rand Corporation](https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/gun-ownership.html)

   7 [Nationwide Children’s Hospital](https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/research/areas-of-research/center-for-injury-research-and-policy/injury-topics/general/gun-safety) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)