

An issue of public health and safety:

Utah Gun Violence Report



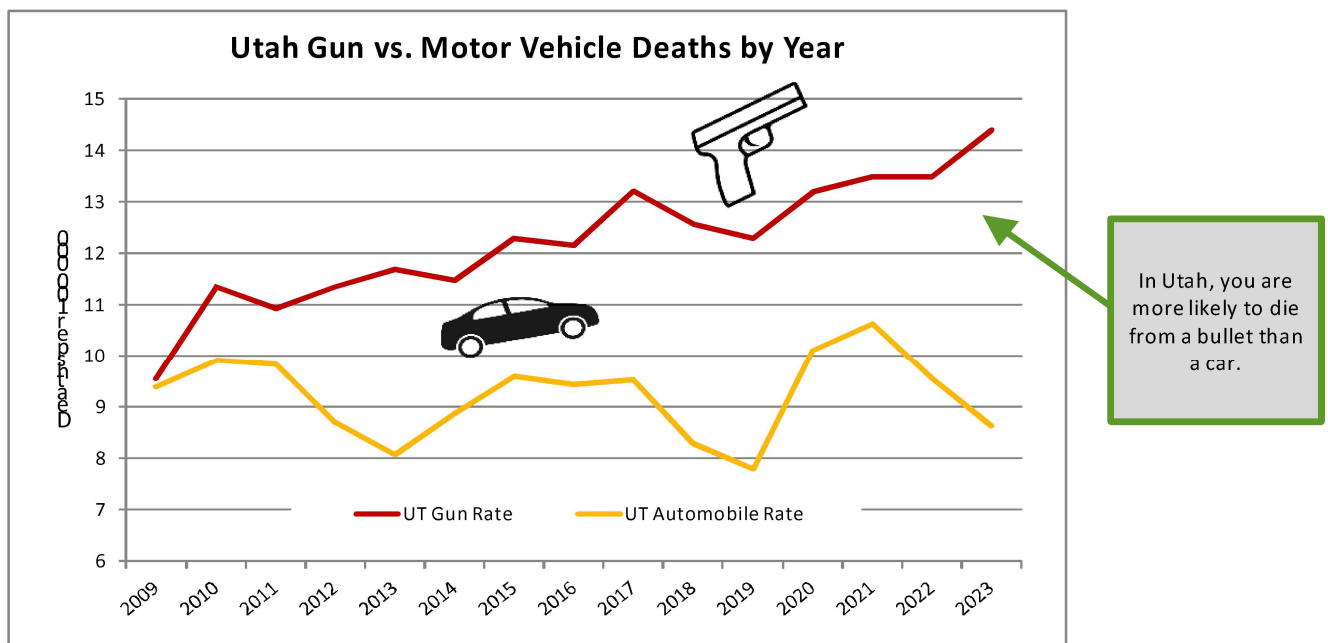
2024 Edition

Introduction

The number of people killed and wounded by firearms continues to rise year by year in Utah and across the United States. The Gun Violence Prevention Center of Utah is dedicated to advocating for regulations and practices that will reverse that trend. We are non-partisan, and many of our members own guns. Our mission is to prevent the tragedy of gun violence through education and reasonable regulation of firearms.*

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the various aspects of gun violence and steps that have been or could be taken to reduce its frequency and impact. We send the report to the press and to Utah’s elected officials at both the state and national levels to incentivize efforts to prevent future deaths. It can also be made available to others who would use its contents in the interest of enhancing public safety.

The first section of the report presents data on gun deaths in Utah and the nation, including suicides, domestic violence, unintentional shootings, and officer-involved incidents. The second section describes the current legal situation regarding gun ownership. This includes permitless carry, control of gun sales, limitations on access, crisis intervention orders, etc. The third section reviews actions that can reverse the trend of escalating gun violence.

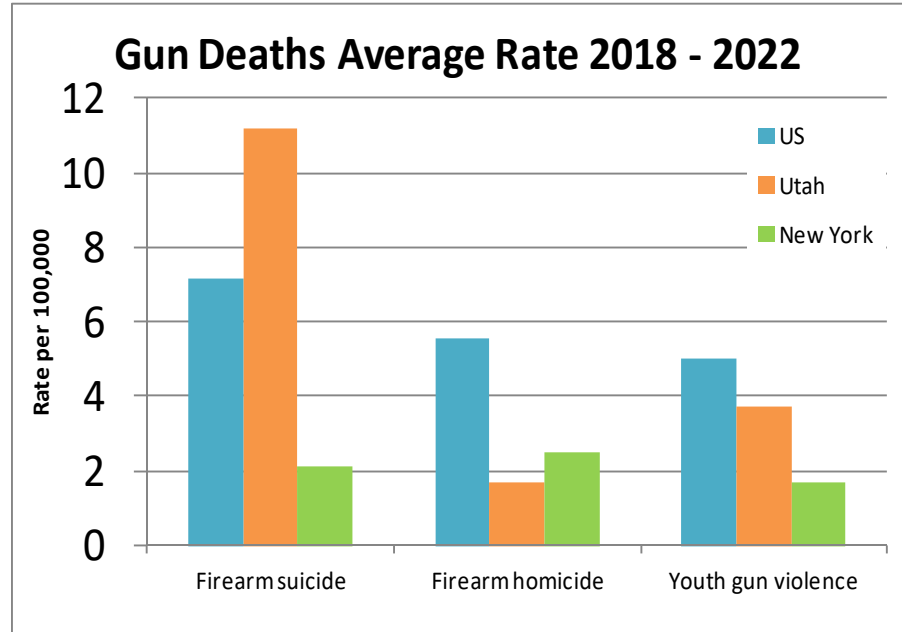


*More information about GVPC and its history and activities can be found in the Appendix at the end of this report.

An Overview of Gun Violence

Gun violence comes in many forms. Some of the following categories overlap; for example, most domestic violence deaths are homicides, often followed by the suicide of the shooter. New York is included in the illustrations below because it is one of the states to earn an A grade for the strength of its gun laws.

FIREARM SUICIDE: Over 50% of gun deaths in the U.S. are self-inflicted. The easy availability of firearms to those in distress and the increased lethality of firearms (85% of attempts are fatal vs. less than 3% of overdose attempts) makes suicide attempts more likely to result in death.



- More than half of all suicides in the U.S. are carried out with a firearm. Seventy-eight percent of gun suicide victims are white males.
- Gun suicides also have a disproportionate impact on teens, young adults, older men and veterans. Easy access to a gun triples the risk of suicide death.

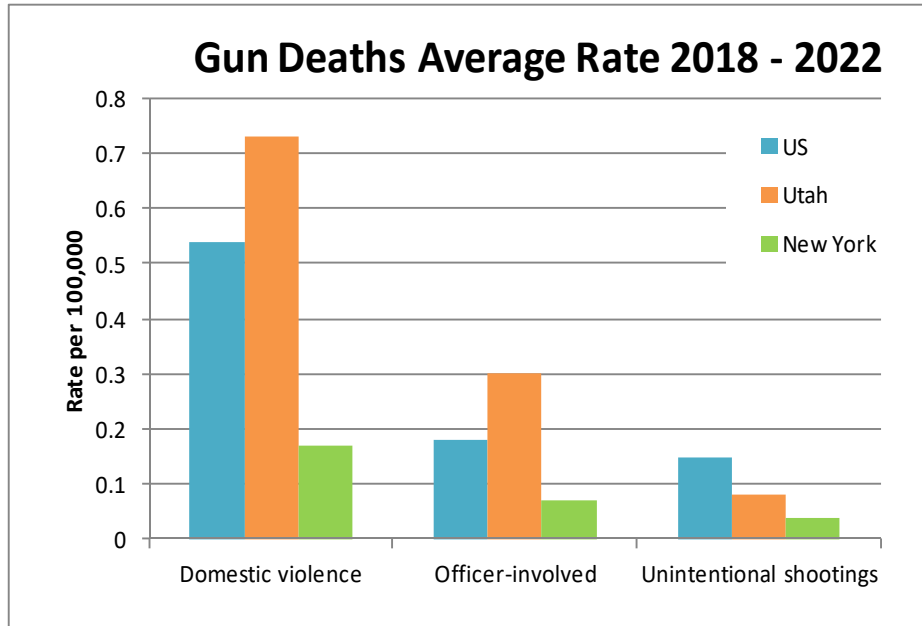
FIREARM HOMICIDE: This includes any murder committed with a firearm, whether the murder is the result of an altercation, a domestic situation, road rage or during the commission of a criminal act, such as an armed robbery or retaliatory shooting.

- Experts agree that because of easy access to guns, the U.S. has a much higher gun homicide rate than other high-income countries.
- Between 2011 and 2022, the U.S. experienced a 74% increase in gun homicide.

YOUTH GUN VIOLENCE: Beyond the young lives cut short and debilitating injuries, exposure to gun violence causes trauma and decreased potential among children.

- Guns are the leading cause of death for those 0 – 19 years of age, killing over 4,500 children a year.
- Three million children will be directly exposed to gun violence resulting in death, injury or trauma each year.
- Young children are most affected by gun homicides in the home, which are often related to domestic or family violence. Older children are at an increased risk of gun suicide and homicides.
- The gun violence epidemic hits underserved communities of color particularly hard. Non-Hispanic black children and teens are 20X more likely than their Non-Hispanic white counterparts to die of gun homicide. Hispanic children and teens are 3.7X more likely to die by firearm homicide than are their white peers.

Overview of Gun Violence, cont.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: For the millions of American women and their children affected by domestic violence every year, guns in the hands of domestic abusers pose a serious, lethal threat.

- Women in the U.S. are 21 times more likely to be killed with a gun than women in other high-income countries. Nearly half of all women murdered are killed by intimate partners and firearms are the most common method. Twenty-five million Americans have been threatened or injured by an intimate partner with a gun.
- Domestic violence victims are five times as likely to be killed when abusers have access to guns.

OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTINGS: In the course of their duties, police officers sometimes shoot and kill suspects who threaten violence to officers or the public. Officers are themselves sometimes killed or injured by suspects.

UNINTENTIONAL SHOOTINGS: Millions of homes contain guns. Few states require adequate safety training for safely storing and handling firearms, contributing to unintentional shooting injuries and deaths. The majority of unintentional shooting deaths involve people under age 24. They are most often shot by someone their own age. The vast majority of unintentional firearm deaths among children are related to child access to firearms and are either self-inflicted or at the hands of another child.

MASS SHOOTINGS: While mass shootings with high casualty numbers gain the most media attention, most mass shootings stem from domestic violence, workplace violence or an altercation. In 2021, the U.S. averaged two mass shootings (four or more people shot in a single incident, not including the shooter) every day. Mass shootings can and do occur anywhere: homes, schools, places of worship, movie theaters, shopping centers, night clubs, street festivals, concerts and restaurants.

Table of Contents

Introduction	i
An Overview of Gun Violence	ii
Table of Contents	iv
U.S. Gun Violence	1
Utah Gun Violence	2
Utah Firearm Mortality 2009 – 2023	3
Utah Firearm Mortalities by Local Health District	4
Firearm Suicide in the U.S.	5
Firearm Suicide in Utah: 2009 – 2023	6
Utah Youth Gun Suicide	7
U.S. Youth Gun Violence	8
Utah Youth Gun Deaths: 2009 – 2023	9
Utah Firearm Homicide: 2009 – 2023	10
Guns and Domestic Violence in the U.S.	11
Guns and Domestic Violence in Utah	12
Mass Shootings	13
Mass Shootings in Utah	14
Unintentional Shootings	15
Utah Officer-Involved Shootings	17
Gun Ownership in Utah	18
Permitless Carry: More Violent Crime	19
Background Check Loopholes	20

Table of Contents, cont.

State Laws: Private Sales Loophole	21
Armslist and Utah Gun Exchange (UGE)	22
Straw Purchasing, Gun Trafficking and Unscrupulous Dealers	23
Illegally Transported Firearms in Airports	24
Lost and Stolen Firearms	25
Utah's Stand Your Ground (SYG) Law	26
Guns in Schools	27
Safe Storage Prevents Youth Firearm Suicides	28
Child Access Prevention	29
Child Access Prevention Laws Compared	30
Crisis Intervention Orders (CIO)	31
Crisis Intervention Orders: Success in Other States	32
Expanded Background Checks	33
Support for Expanded Background Checks in Utah and the U.S.	34
Bipartisan Safer Communities Act	35
A Comparison of Gun Violence to Other Public Health Issues	36
Firearm Mortality Rate and Gun Law Grades	37
Summary	38
Gun Violence Prevention Center of Utah – Who are we? What do we do?	39
Acknowledgments	40

U.S. Gun Violence

1 million

One million Americans have been shot in the last decade.

12X

The U.S. gun death rate is 12 times that of other high-income countries.

35%

Americans make up 35% of all firearm suicides globally.

21X

Women in the U.S. are 21 times more likely to be killed with a gun than women in peer nations.

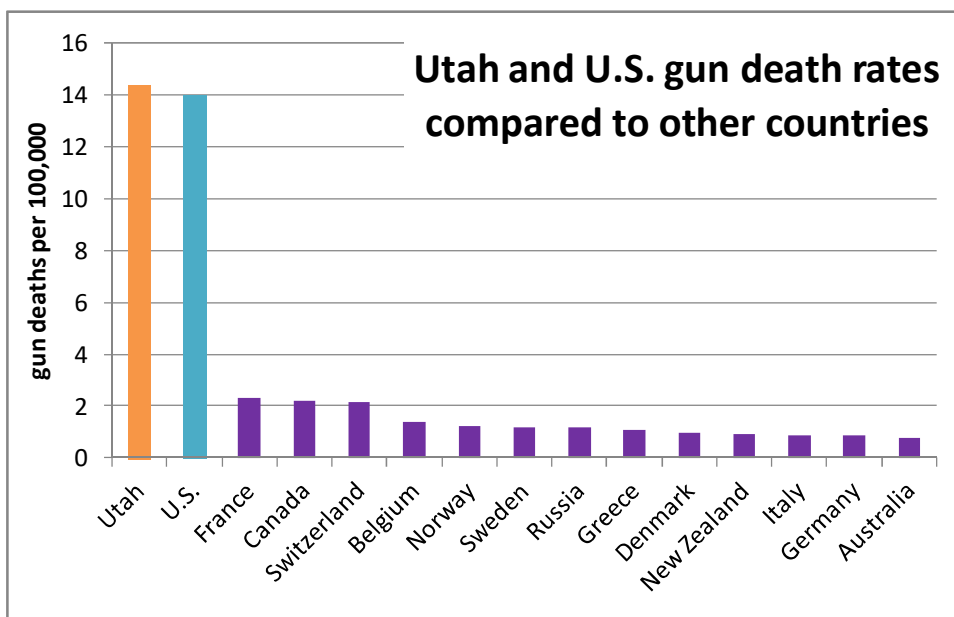
On average, 132 Americans were killed with guns every day in 2022, one death every 11 minutes.

Of the gun deaths in the U.S., suicide accounts for nearly 54%. Globally, the U.S. accounts for 35% of all firearm suicides **while making up only 4% of the world population.**

In 2021, gun deaths reached their highest level in at least 40 years, with 48,830 deaths that year alone. This was followed by 2022, with 48,117 deaths occurring that year. Nonfatal firearm injuries are also on the rise.

National gun violence rates obscure the true levels of violence in certain places, particularly in underserved communities and communities of color.

Gun violence has an outsized economic impact on Americans beyond the devastating human toll it wreaks on society. Harvard Medical School researchers found that gun violence costs the U.S. **\$557 billion annually, or 2.6% of gross domestic product.**



Sources: WISQARS, Giffords Law Center, Commonwealth Fund Report.

Utah Gun Violence

The growing gun violence in Utah is a strain on families – especially youth.

In 2018, The Salt Lake Tribune published an article titled, “Suicide rates in Utah currently outnumber homicides and access to guns is a driving factor, according to a new report.” The article stated: *“But while a parent might purchase a gun with the hope or intent of protecting their children from an attacker,” Utah Rep. Steve Eliason [R. Salt Lake] said, ‘it is considerably more likely that a child will use that weapon to take his or her own life.’*”

Gun violence impacts Utah economically.

Gun violence costs Utah \$5.5 billion each year, of which \$50.1 million is paid by taxpayers. The costs come from healthcare costs, law enforcement and criminal justice expenses, costs to employers and lost income.

On average, one Utahn is killed with a gun every 18 hours.

In general the rate of gun death in Utah has been consistently at or above the U.S. average. (Although the rate fell below the U.S. rate in 2021 and 2022, that is because the U.S. rate rose dramatically, not because Utah’s rate dropped.) In 2023, 493 Utahns were shot and killed, the most Utahns killed with guns in recent years. In the 15 years between 2009 and 2023 the number of Utahns killed with guns nearly doubled.

84%

Over the past 10 years, 84% of all firearm deaths in Utah were suicides.

#1

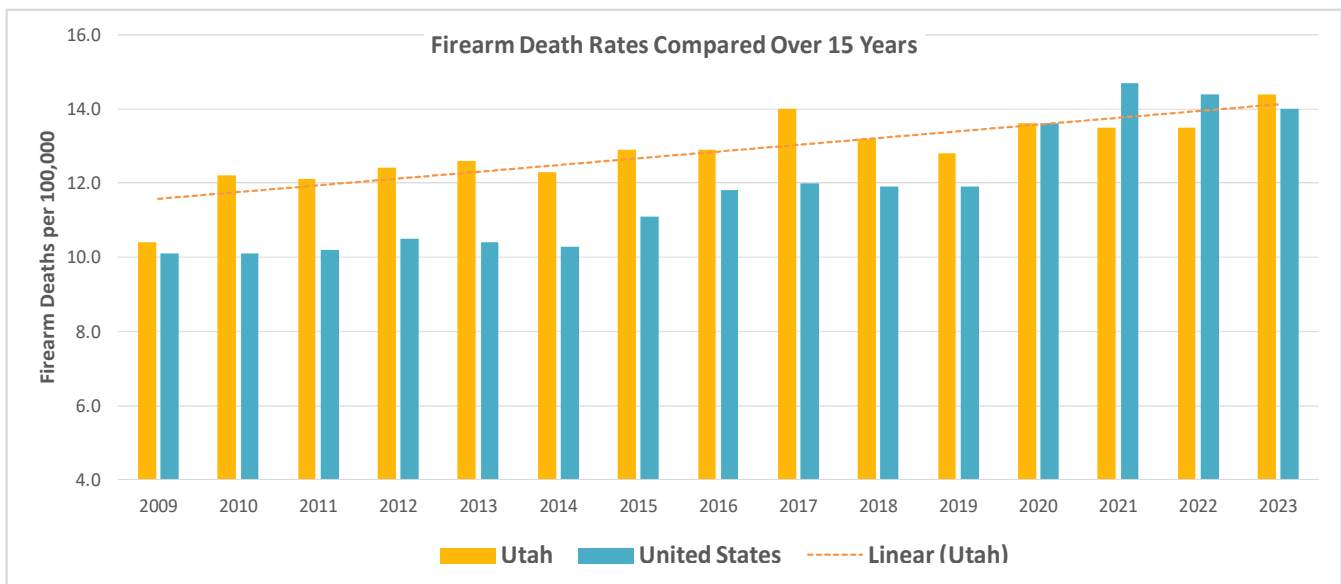
Firearms are the leading cause of death among children and teens in Utah.

38%

The rate of gun deaths in Utah increased 38% between 2009 and 2023.

42%

Forty-two percent of adult homicides in Utah are domestic violence related.



Sources: WISQARS, kff.org, Giffords Law Center.

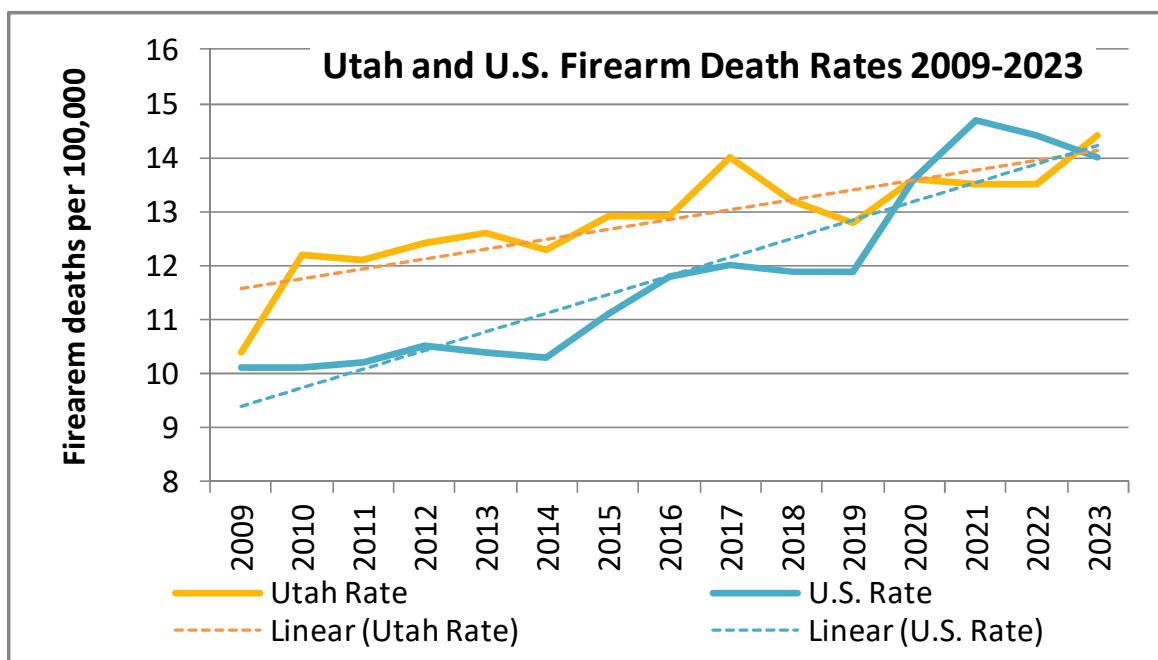
Utah Firearm Mortality 2009 – 2023

Utah and U.S. Firearm Death Rates Per 100,000			
Year	Utah Deaths	Utah Rate	U.S. Rate
2009	260	10.4	10.1
2010	314	12.2	10.1
2011	308	12.1	10.2
2012	324	12.4	10.5
2013	339	12.6	10.4
2014	337	12.3	10.3
2015	367	12.9	11.1
2016	370	12.9	11.8
2017	410	14.0	12.0
2018	397	13.2	11.9
2019	394	12.8	11.9
2020	429	13.6	13.6
2021	450	13.5	14.7
2022	456	13.5	14.4
2023	493	14.4	14

Rates are per 100,000

Firearm mortality includes homicides, fatal domestic shootings, officer involved shootings, firearm suicides, unintentional shootings and shootings where the intent or motive is undetermined.

- Based on this data, on average one Utahn dies every 18 hours from gun violence.
- From 2009 to 2019, Utah consistently had a higher fatal firearm mortality rate than that of the United States.
- Between 2009 and 2023, firearm mortality rates in Utah increased by 38%.



Source: WISQARS.

Utah Firearm Mortalities by Local Health District

For the five-year period from 2019-2023, eight of thirteen Local Health Districts in Utah, had firearm mortality rates above the national average (the national average was 13.5). Four of those had rates well above the national average (from 42-110% higher). Reporting from some rural areas is inconsistent, suggesting that their death rates may be even higher.

Local Health District	Counties	Total Firearm deaths 2019-2023	Average yearly population 2019-2023	Age-adjusted Rate per 100,000 over 5 years
Bear River	Box Elder, Cache, Rich**	120	198,579	13.6
Central Utah	Juab, Millard, Sanpete, Sevier, Piute**, Wayne**	90	80,368	22.1
Davis	Davis	194	368,124	11.2
Salt Lake	Salt Lake	816	1,197,467	13.5
San Juan	San Juan**	13	14,737	17.4
Southeast Utah	Carbon, Emery, Grand	40	40,191	19.2
Southwest Utah	Beaver, Iron, Garfield, Kane, Washington	226	269,033	16.9
Summit	Summit**	27	42,837	12
Tooele*	Tooele	72	75,562	22.6
Tricounty*	Duchesne, Uintah, Daggett**	72	56,829	28.3
Utah	Utah	308	685,282	10.1
Wasatch	Wasatch**	12	36,000	6.9
Weber-Morgan	Weber, Morgan	211	278,081	15.6
Utah	All Counties	2201	3,343,090	13.6
USA	All States; All Counties	224,362	332,000,348	13.5

*Missing one year's data; numbers based on 4 years

**County does not consistently report numbers and/or numbers are low leading to a high margin of error.

Rates in red are higher than the national rate.

Firearm Suicide in the U.S.

66

In 2023 66 people per day used a gun to take their own life.

3X

Access to a gun in the home increases the odds of suicide more than three-fold.

90%

Ninety percent of individuals who survive a suicide attempt never attempt again.

2X

The veteran suicide rate is almost twice as high as the non-veteran suicide rate, according to the VA.

416

Four hundred sixteen people died by suicide using a firearm in the state of Utah in 2023 (84% of the total deaths for the year.)

Suicide in the U.S. is a significant public health problem and firearms play a large role. In 2023, about 24,000 people used a gun to take their own life: 66 people every single day.

Over the last decade, the suicide rate for American veterans has been much higher and risen faster than the suicide rate of the general population. According to the Veterans Administration Suicide Data Report, veterans accounted for 16% of all adult gun suicides in the U.S. in 2021, and 72% of those were carried out by firearm.

Though most people who have attempted suicide have been experiencing emotional struggles, suicides are usually impulsive acts using whatever methods are immediately available. Forty-eight percent (48%) of people harm themselves within ten minutes of deciding to attempt suicide, 71% do so within one hour.

In these moments of crisis, people who reach for guns are unlikely to survive. Firearms are by far the most lethal suicide attempt method. Approximately 85% of suicide attempts with a gun result in death.

While guns are used in only 5% of suicide attempts, they are responsible for over 50% of suicide deaths.

Firearm suicide rates vary greatly across the country. In places where gun ownership is more common, suicide rates, both overall and by gun, are generally higher. There is substantive research linking easy access to firearms with an increased rate of firearm suicide. Suicide interventions that address access to lethal means are critical components of a comprehensive suicide prevention strategy.

Firearm Suicide in Utah: 2009 – 2023

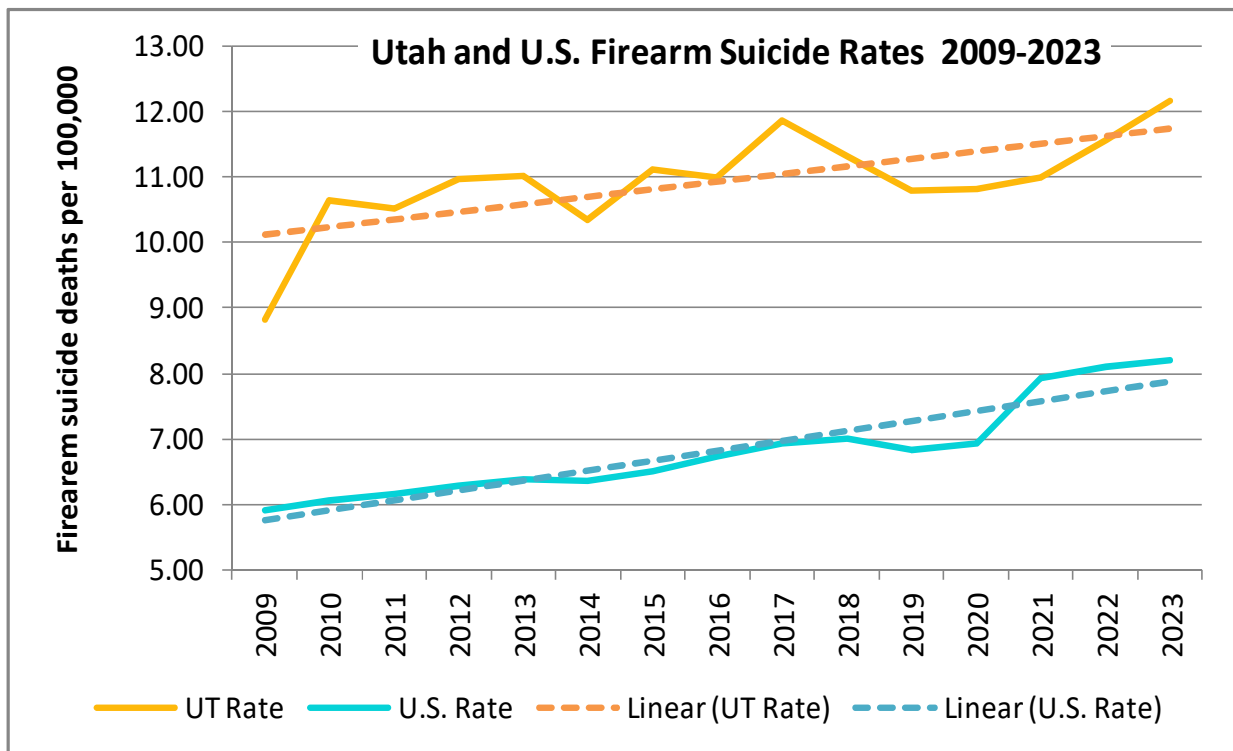
Firearm suicide includes any completed suicide where a gun was used. Firearm suicides are unique in both their impulsivity and their lethality. Unlike other methods of suicide, firearm suicides take little planning and are almost always successful.

Firearm suicides make up the majority of Utah gun deaths every year. In 2023, they accounted for 84% of total gun deaths for the year. Nationally, firearm suicides made up 56% of total gun deaths. Firearm suicide rates in Utah consistently outpace the national average.

Between 2009 and 2023, firearm suicide rates in Utah increased 38%.

Utah and U.S. Firearm suicide rates: all ages			
Year	Utah Deaths	Utah Rate	U.S. Rate
2009	217	8.83	5.91
2010	275	10.65	6.06
2011	268	10.52	6.16
2012	283	10.97	6.29
2013	295	11.02	6.38
2014	278	10.35	6.36
2015	313	11.11	6.5
2016	309	10.99	6.72
2017	344	11.87	6.93
2018	339	11.32	7.01
2019	329	10.79	6.83
2020	339	10.81	6.93
2021	367	10.99	7.93
2022	391	11.56	8.11
2023	416	12.17	8.19

Rates are per 100,000



Source: WISQARS.

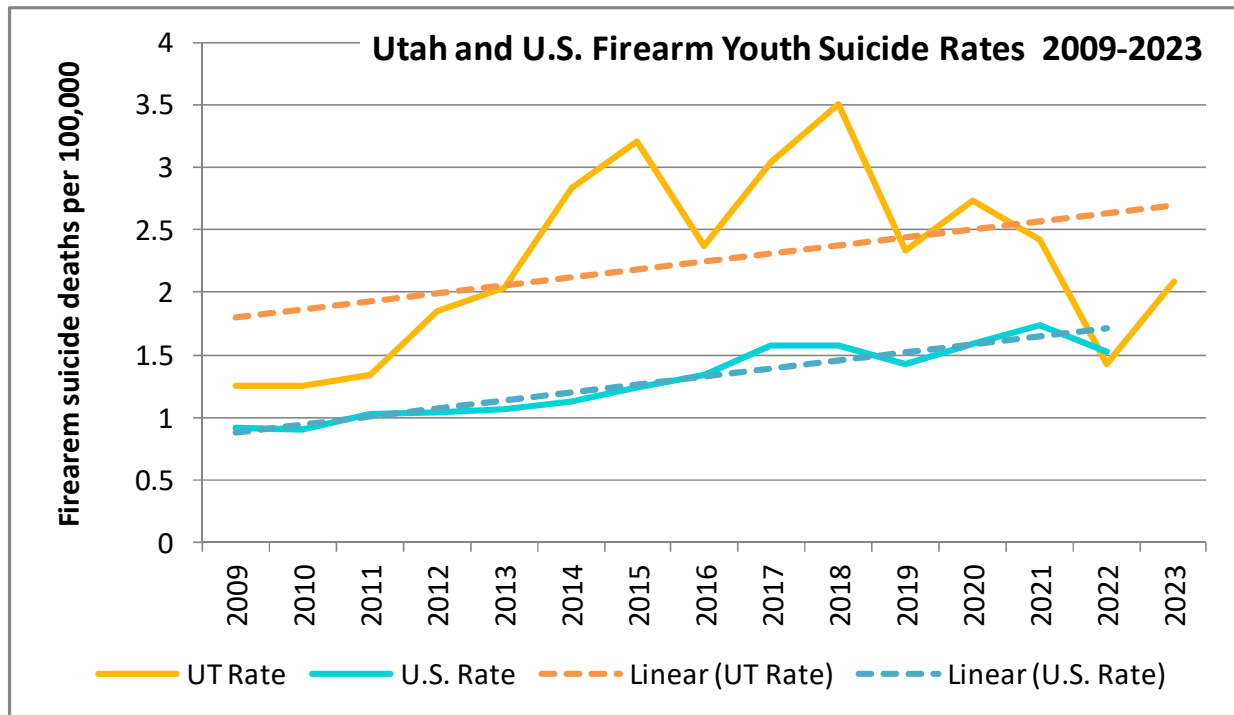
Utah Youth Gun Suicide

Utah and U.S. Firearm Suicide Rates: Ages 0-19			
Year	Utah	Utah Rate	U.S. Rate
2009	11	1.25	0.91
2010	12	1.25	0.9
2011	13	1.34	1.03
2012	18	1.85	1.04
2013	20	2.03	1.07
2014	28	2.83	1.13
2015	32	3.21	1.24
2016	24	2.37	1.34
2017	31	3.04	1.58
2018	36	3.51	1.58
2019	24	2.34	1.43
2020	28	2.73	1.59
2021	25	2.42	1.74
2022	15	1.43	1.53
2023	22	2.08	*

Rates are per 100,000

Youth suicide rates in Utah exceeded the national rate almost every year since 2009. Although the numbers are relatively low (leading to an erratic line graph), there is a clear overall upward trend in the rate.

*U.S. 2023 data not available



U.S. Youth Gun Violence

In 2022 almost 14,000 American children and teens (ages 0 to 19) were hospitalized after being shot. The effects of gun violence extend far beyond bullet wounds and death. It is estimated that 5% (3.6 million) of America’s children witness a shooting each year according to research published in *JAMA Pediatrics*. Gun violence shapes the lives of the children who witness it, know someone who was shot or live in fear of the next shooting.

A recent study published in the *Journal of the American College of Surgeons* found that firearm-related injuries are the leading cause of pediatric death in the U.S.

According to 2022 CDC data, teens account for 83% of children killed with guns. The majority, 68%, of annual child gun deaths (ages 0 -19) are homicides. But every year, **27% (over 1,200 children and teens) of deaths are due to suicide**, 3% are characterized as unintentional shootings and 2% occur in ambiguous or undetermined situations.

When it comes to firearm suicides, the overwhelming number of kids using a gun to take their own lives are white. In 2022 61% of children 0-19 who died by suicide with a gun were non-Hispanic white. In contrast, non-Hispanic black children and teens account for 63% of homicide deaths, despite the fact that only 13% of Americans are black.

According to 2022 CDC data, guns are the leading cause of death for non-Hispanic black children and teens in America, and they are 20X more likely than their non-Hispanic white counterparts to die by firearm homicide. They are 10X more likely to be hospitalized for a firearm assault than white children. Hispanic children and teens are 3.7X more likely to die by firearm homicide than their white peers.

#1

Gun violence is the leading cause of death for children in the U.S.

4,590

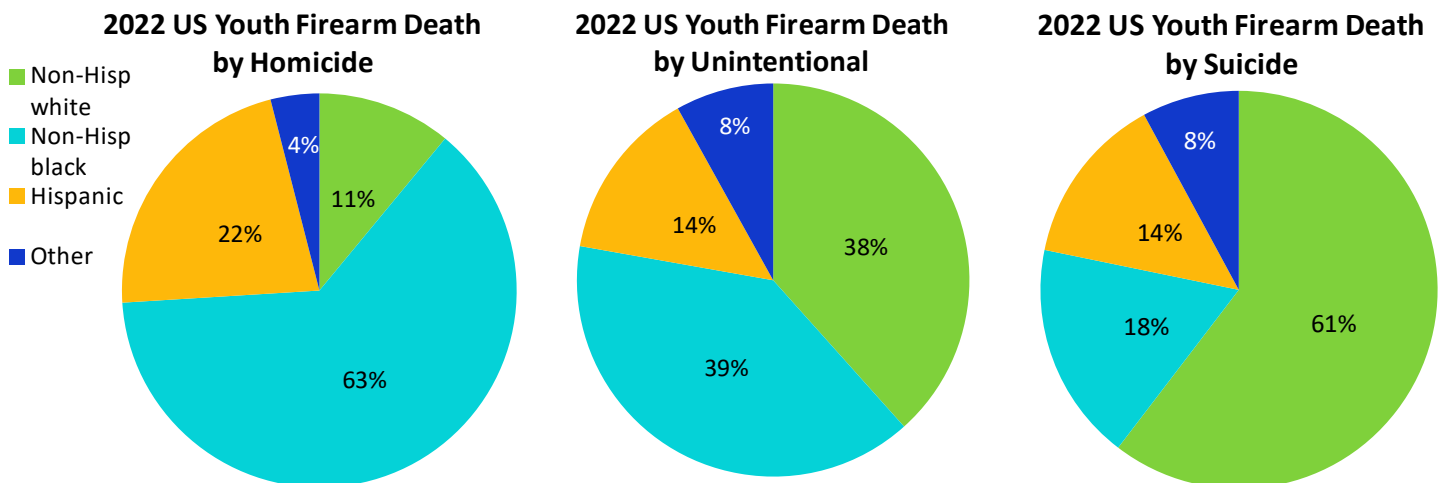
In 2022 4,590 American children (aged 0-19) were killed with firearms.

13 per day

On average 13 American children (aged 0-19) were killed with firearms each day in 2022.

3.6 million

Over three and a half million children witness or experience gun violence each year in the U.S.



Source: WISQARS.

Utah Youth Gun Deaths: 2009 – 2023

Firearm mortality includes all forms of fatal gun violence: homicides, fatal domestic violence shootings and legal intervention, as well as firearm suicides, unintentional shootings and shootings where the intent or motive is undetermined. Although our youth homicide rate is lower than the national average, for four of the last ten years our overall youth gun death rate was higher than the national average due primarily to youth suicides.

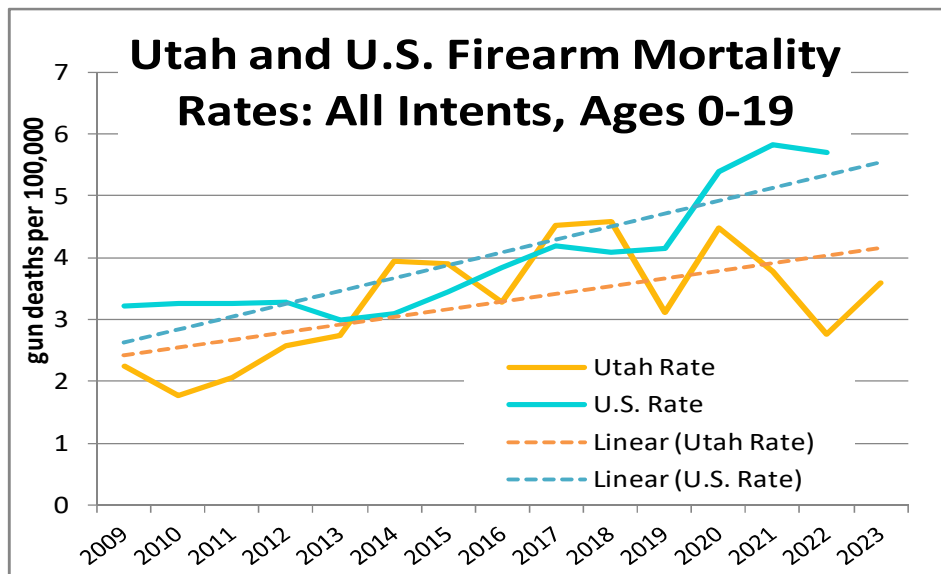
Utah and U.S. Firearm Mortality: All Intents, Ages 0-19			
Year	Utah Deaths	Utah Rate	U.S. Rate
2009	20	2.25	3.22
2010	17	1.77	3.26
2011	20	2.06	3.26
2012	23	2.57	3.27
2013	27	2.74	3
2014	38	3.94	3.1
2015	39	3.91	3.44
2016	33	3.27	3.84
2017	46	4.51	4.19
2018	47	4.58	4.08
2019	32	3.11	4.15
2020	46	4.48	5.38
2021	39	3.77	5.83
2022	29	2.77	5.7
2023	38	3.59	*

Rates are per 100,000 people

Although there have been ups and downs, the rate of youth firearm deaths in Utah has been increasing by an average of 5.6% per year since 2009.

Firearm deaths among Utah youths rose sharply, more than doubling between 2009 and 2018. In 5 of those years the Utah rate exceeded that of the U.S. Despite a falling trend since 2018, the overall trend has risen since 2009.

*U.S. 2023 data not available.

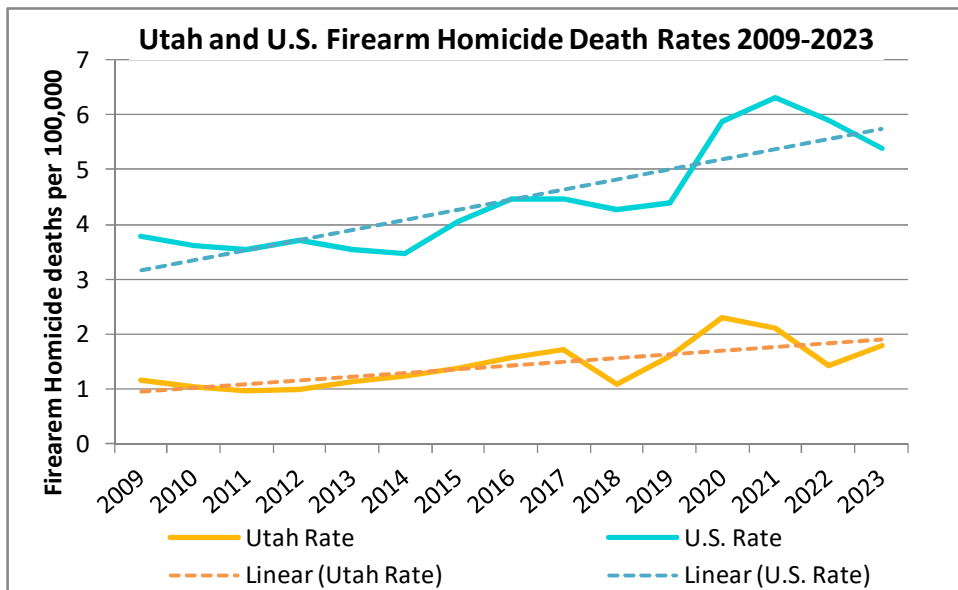


Utah Firearm Homicide: 2009 – 2023

Firearm homicide includes any murder committed with a firearm, whether the murder is the result of an altercation, a domestic situation, road rage or during the commission of a criminal act, such as an armed robbery or retaliatory shooting.

Utah’s firearm homicide rates are lower than the national average; however, between 2011 and 2020, firearm homicide rates in Utah increased 141% with a sharp rise between 2019 and 2020.

Utah and U.S. Firearm Homicide Rates Per 100,000			
Year	Utah Deaths	Utah Rate	U.S. Rate
2009	30	1.15	3.78
2010	27	1.05	3.62
2011	27	0.96	3.55
2012	28	0.98	3.7
2013	33	1.14	3.55
2014	36	1.23	3.46
2015	41	1.37	4.05
2016	48	1.58	4.46
2017	53	1.71	4.47
2018	34	1.08	4.27
2019	51	1.59	4.39
2020	75	2.31	5.88
2021	70	2.1	6.31
2022	48	1.42	5.9
2023	61	1.78	5.38



Source: WISQARS.

Guns and Domestic Violence in the U.S.

81%

Eighty-one percent of Americans support legislation that keeps guns away from domestic abusers.

13 hours

One American woman is shot and killed by an intimate partner every 13 hours.

5X

The presence of a gun in an intimate partner situation increases the risk of homicide for a woman five-fold.

4.5 million

Four and a half million women in America have been threatened with a gun by an intimate partner, and nearly one million women alive today have survived being shot by an intimate partner.

Firearms and domestic violence are a lethal combination: injuring and killing family members, children and bystanders every day in the U.S. The deadly intersection between guns and domestic violence is a uniquely American problem. **Two-thirds of all mass shootings occur during a domestic violence incident or are perpetrated by someone with a history of domestic violence.**

Violence against women is a public health crisis, and guns make violent crimes against women more deadly. Most women who die by gun violence are killed in a domestic violence context. In fact, the presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide for the woman five-fold. **Nationally, more than 55% of all intimate partner-related murders of women are committed with a firearm.**

Even when a weapon is not discharged, abusers often use the presence of a gun to intimidate and terrorize victims, inflicting enormous psychological damage. A paper published in the journal *Violence and Gender* in 2017 noted that: “The fear of a firearm threat is significantly associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It’s stronger even than the link between physical or sexual abuse and PTSD.”

Despite the clear risk domestic violence presents, state and federal laws still make it too easy for abusers to obtain firearms or to regain access to guns they have dispossessed to someone else. Protecting the lives of women and their children requires that lawmakers take steps to **make it as difficult as possible for dangerous abusers and stalkers to gain access to firearms.** Studies find that states that require relinquishment of firearms upon criminal conviction or issuance of a restraining order are most likely to protect victims and survivors.

Across the country, a number of states have adopted stronger domestic violence laws. A robust body of research shows that these laws are associated with reductions in intimate partner homicides by as much as 16%. **States like Utah with weak gun laws see higher rates of domestic violence gun homicide.**

Guns and Domestic Violence in Utah

Domestic violence is willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, financial and emotional abuse. Anyone of any race, gender, age, sexual orientation, social status or religion can be a victim of domestic violence. That being said, members of marginalized communities (Hispanic, Black, Pacific Islander, Native American) experience domestic violence at much higher rates. LGBTQ and disabled Americans also experience domestic violence at higher rates.

According to 2020/2021 data, there were 1,929 reported Utah cases of violence in the presence of a child. When children experience or witness domestic violence in the home, it becomes an adverse childhood experience (ACE). These experiences undermine a child's sense of safety, stability and bonding and can have devastating lifelong impacts. In long-term rigorous studies, ACEs during childhood have been linked to chronic health problems (including cancer, diabetes and heart disease), mental illness, substance use problems, sex trafficking, food insecurity, toxic stress and suicide. ACEs also negatively impact educational completion, job opportunities and even earning potential.

Domestic violence is the third leading cause of homelessness among families. 50% of all women who are homeless report that domestic violence was the immediate cause of their homelessness, according to The National Center on Family Homelessness.

There are many policies that Utah could enact to address its domestic violence issues:

- Relinquishment laws require abusers to surrender their firearms at the time of judgment.
- Closing the private sales loophole prevents domestic abusers from easily accessing guns by requiring a background check on all gun sales.
- Domestic violence laws that encompass dating partners and stalking.
- Crisis Intervention Orders, Emergency Protective Orders, and Red Flag laws allow law enforcement to temporarily remove guns from someone who has made a credible threat of violence against others.
- Update and reinstate the Violence Against Women Act at the Federal level.

1 in 5

Between 2019 and 2023, 1 in 5 adult firearm homicides in Utah were related to domestic violence.

68%

In 2022 68 percent of Utah domestic violence homicides involved a firearm.

1 in 3

One in three (over half a million Utah women) experience domestic abuse or intimate partner violence in their lifetime.

Mass Shootings

656

In 2023 there were 656 mass shootings in the U.S. according to data from the Gun Violence Archive.

13/week

In 2023, there were more than 13 mass shootings per week on average in the U.S.

78%

According to a report on mass shootings by the U.S. Secret Service, prior to the shooting, 78% of mass shooters “exhibited behaviours that caused concerns in others.”

The places that suffer mass shootings run the full gamut of American communities. These tragedies occur in large cities and small towns; in rich, poor and middle-class places; and in racially mixed as well as predominantly white communities. Most occur in mundane places, like residences, driveways and parking lots. Some are gang-related; others are related to domestic violence or workplace disputes.

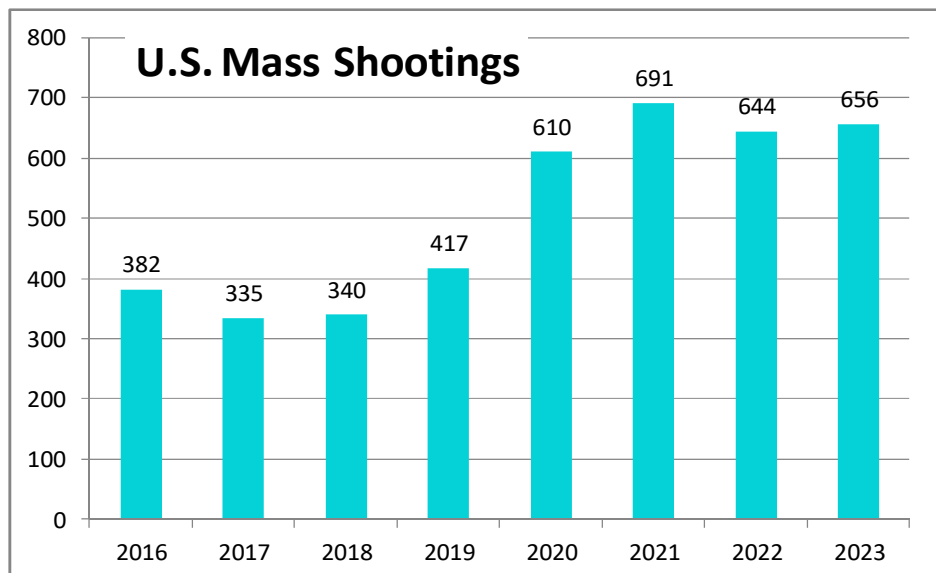
Source: WISQARS.

Ten Deadliest U.S. Mass Shootings			
Location	City/State	Year	Deaths
* Route 91 Harvest Music Festival	Las Vegas, NV	2017	58
*Pulse Night Club	Orlando, FL	2016	49
Virginia Tech	Blacksburg, VA	2007	32
Sandy Hook Elementary Sch	Newtown, CT	2012	26
*First Baptist Church	Sutherland Springs, TX	2017	26
Luby’s Cafeteria	Killeen, TX	1991	23
*Walmart	El Paso, TX	2019	22
McDonald’s	San Ysidro, CA	1984	21
*Robb Elementary Sch	Uvalde, TX	2022	21
*Marjory Stoneman Douglas High	Parkland, FL	2018	17

* Of the ten deadliest mass shootings in American history, six took place in the last ten years.

According to the American Psychiatric Association, mass shootings by people with serious mental illness represent less than 1% of the yearly gun homicides in America. Research shows that people with a mental illness are more likely to harm themselves than others and are often the victims of violent crime. Mental health experts discourage blaming mental illness for gun violence, including mass shootings, noting that the most consistent and powerful predictors that someone will resort to gun violence are a history of violent behavior, substance abuse, misogyny and easy access to firearms.

Although high profile “spectacle shootings” receive most of the media attention, they make up only a fraction of mass shootings (events where four or more people are killed or injured) in the U.S. The most common mass shootings are domestic violence incidents involving entire families and usually end with the shooter dying by suicide.



Mass Shootings in Utah

Mass shootings are defined as an event where four or more people are injured or killed. There have been three mass shootings in Utah in recent history: the Trolley Square Shooting and the Grantsville and Enoch cases of familicide. The largest mass shooting in U.S. history was the Las Vegas massacre where three Utahns were killed and many more were injured or traumatized.

Trolley Square Shooting, SLC, UT, February 12, 2007: 6 killed, 4 injured

Remembering the victims:

- Jeffrey Walker, 53
- Vanessa Quinn, 29
- Brad Frantz, 24
- Kirsten Hinckley, 15
- Teresa Ellis, 29

Injured:

- Alan “A.J.” Walker, 16 (son of Jeffrey Walker)
- Shawn Munns, 34
- Carolyn Tuft, 43 (mother of Kirsten Hinckley)
- Stacy Hanson, 53

Grantsville, UT, January 17, 2020: 4 killed

Remembering the victims:

- Consuela Alejandra Haynie, 52
- Milan Haynie, 12
- Alexis Haynie, 15
- Matthey Haynie, 14

The perpetrator of the Grantsville shooting was a 16 year old family member who used a family handgun. This prompted a tweet from Governor Gary Herbert urging Utah families to secure their firearms.

Enoch, UT, January 4, 2023, 7 killed

Remembering the victims:

- Tausha Haight, 40
- Macie Haight, 17
- Briley Haight, 12
- Sienna Haight, 7
- Ammon Haight, 7
- Gavin Haight, 4
- Gail Earl, 78 (mother of Tausha Haight)

Michael Haight, 42, shot and killed 7 members of his family, then took his own life.

Las Vegas Nevada Country Music Festival, Oct. 2, 2017: 58 killed, 526 injured

Remembering Utah victims:

- Heather Warino Alvarado, 35, who operated a day care center in Cedar City.
- Cameron Robinson, 29, lived in St. George and worked for the city of Las Vegas
- Neysa Tonks, 45, a Brighton High School graduate

Although the Las Vegas massacre was not in Utah, three of the victims and scores of the injured and traumatized attendees were Utah residents:

Unintentional Shootings

Among the most tragic gun deaths are those involving young people, many of which are unintentional. In the 15 years from 2009-2023, 14 youths between the ages of 0 and 19 died in this way in Utah. Nationally, in just the last 5 years, there were 693 such deaths. Many more children are injured in unintentional shootings, often with life-long consequences. The families of the victims are deeply affected, as are the families of the shooters.

Every year in Utah, there are numerous cases in which a child either unintentionally shoots someone else or is accidentally shot. The Gun Violence Archive keeps a comprehensive database of unintentional shootings, and local news outlets provide additional details. The following cases represent a small portion of such cases in Utah over the last several years.

MONTE CRISTO: A 14-year-old Weber County boy died after he was unintentionally shot and killed while riding in a car with his family near target shooters in a remote area in northern Utah. The boy was sitting in the back seat of the family car as his father drove them out of the mountains to return home, when a bullet broke through the window and struck the boy in the head. The target shooters were apparently unaware of the road several hundred feet from their paper target. The woman who fired the fatal shot was charged with manslaughter. (KSL.com, September 24 and November 5, 2018)

WEST VALLEY CITY: A 15-year-old was shot and killed inside a home during a school lunch break. A gun brought to the home by another boy was picked up by a 14-year-old, who had never handled a gun before. He waved it around before pointing it at the victim's head and firing. He later said he thought the safety was on. He was charged with manslaughter. (Deseret News, February 5 and February 25, 2019)

MURRAY: A 3-year-old boy shot himself in the head with a gun he found on a counter in his home. Investigators believe the child woke up before other members of his family and climbed up on the counter where he found the gun. (Salt Lake Tribune, January 31, 2020). The child survived.

BRIGHAM CITY: On the same day, a 9-year-old Brigham City child was hospitalized after police say he unintentionally shot himself in the head. He was taken to Brigham City Hospital, then to Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City. (Salt Lake Tribune, January 31, 2020)

KAMAS: An 11-year-old boy was shot and killed by his 14-year-old brother, who located a handgun in his parents' bedroom. He pointed the firearm at the younger boy hoping to scare him, but the gun went off as he pulled the trigger. He was initially charged with manslaughter, but the case was later dismissed. (June 3, 2020; KSL.com, Dec. 21, 2022)

WEST JORDAN: A 13-year-old boy was unintentionally shot and killed by his 15-year-old friend with a handgun one of them had brought to a late-night meeting. The victim's father said, "Gun safety is of the utmost importance to prevent this kind of tragedy and heartache our family has experienced." (KSL.com, July 19, 2021)

Unintentional Shootings, cont.

Two incidents in which young children killed themselves with guns owned by their parents occurred within 11 days of each other in 2024.

SANTAQUIN: A 5-year-old boy shot himself in the head in a back bedroom of his home where he had found a loaded, unsecured 9 mm handgun. He was pronounced dead at the scene. His parents said, “This heartbreaking tragedy has taught us difficult lessons. . . We hope this tragedy serves as a reminder to others to take every precaution to ensure the safety of their children.” (KSL.com, August 23, 2024)

LEHI: An 8-year-old boy unintentionally shot himself in the head with a loaded 9 mm handgun he found under the seat of a car while his mother was shopping inside a Maverik store. He died after being airlifted to a hospital. (KSL.com, September 3, 2024)



Sources: Various Utah News Reports, Utah Public Health Indicator Based Information System (IBIS); Gun Violence Archive.

Utah Officer-Involved Shootings

Gun deaths involving officers of the law represent a small fraction of all gun deaths each year, but they often attract attention and criticism.

In Utah over the past 5 years, 82 people have died as a result of gunfire from officers, while two officers have died after being shot by suspects. This represents 3.8% of all gun deaths in Utah in those years. Across the U.S., the percentages are similar: 6,753 victims of officer shootings, 320 officers killed, representing 3.1% of firearm deaths.

In terms of rates in the last 5 years, officer-involved deaths have occurred at 3 per million in Utah, 1.8 per million in the U.S. as a whole, and 0.7 per million in New York state. Thus, Utah's rate is well above the national average. Both locally and nationally, the number of victims of officer-involved shootings has been increasing.

A key factor in many of these incidents is that the victims have threatened officers with guns or other weapons. Because of Utah's permitless carry law, even when a firearm is not brandished, officers must approach each confrontation with the expectation that the subject is armed.

Many officer-involved incidents result from an individual facing a mental health crisis, and these sometimes end with the suicide of that individual. A number of jurisdictions have begun to address such situations by having a mental health professional travel with officers to incidents where they might be able to defuse the moment. One such experiment in Salt Lake County was recently discontinued.

Here are a few examples of officer-involved deaths from recent years.

OGDEN: Officers responding to a domestic violence call were confronted by John Benedict Coleman, 53, who began firing at them. Ogden police officer Nathan Lyday, 24, was struck and killed. After securing the scene and shooting into the home, police found Coleman, who had a long previous record of threatening and aggressive behavior, dead – apparently from police bullets. (ksl.com, May 28, 2020)

FARMINGTON: Joseph Anthony Manhard, 32, was fleeing police who tried to serve a warrant on him. He broke into a home late at night and took several hostages. While police negotiated for the hostages' release, Manhard reportedly got high on drugs. As he was leaving the home with two hostages, he was killed by a police sniper. (ksl.com, September 10, 2021)

TAYLORSVILLE: Joseph Potts, 34, was killed by police, who were responding to a domestic violence call, after he fired toward them with an assault rifle. (Fox13 News, October 5, 2023)

SPRINGVILLE: Responding to reports of shots being fired, police confronted Mathew Scott Nielsen, 46, a former police officer, who carried a revoked concealed carry permit. He fired and wounded two officers before he was killed by them. Nielsen had been exhibiting bizarre behavior, according to his mother. (ksl.com, April 19, 2023)

ROY: Jeremy Lundgreen, 46, who was a suspect in an Internet Crimes Against Children case for enticing a minor, fled a traffic stop then confronted police and fired at them. He was struck by return fire and died 3 days later. (Fox13 News, August 20, 2024)

WEST JORDAN: When police responded to a domestic violence call, Nicholas Kemp, 45, began firing at them. Officers chased Kemp as he fled while continuing to shoot at them. He was wounded by police gunfire and later died at a hospital. (Fox13 News, July 6, 2024),

Sources: Various Utah News Reports, Gun Violence Archive, WISQARS.

Gun Ownership in Utah

Roughly 32% of American adults own a gun. Another 30% say they might own a gun in the future, and the other third could not imagine ever having one.

In 2020, the RAND Corporation published a long-term study from 1980 to 2016 of gun ownership in all 50 states. They combined survey-based estimates with other data indicative of gun ownership – shooting death records, gun-related magazine subscriptions, background check submissions, etc. – to determine the percentage of adults in each state living in a household with at least one gun.

According to the RAND study, Utah ranked 27th in the nation for gun ownership with 47% of adults sharing their homes with guns. High gun ownership and weak gun laws have been credited with contributing to Utah’s high suicide and domestic violence homicide rates. In 2021 Utah’s gun laws were downgraded to an F by Giffords Law Center, because of the passage of Permitless Carry and a more permissive Stand Your Ground law.

Here is a comparison of Utah to states with higher gun ownership and weaker laws (Montana), lower gun ownership and stronger laws (New York) and similar gun ownership but stronger laws (Minnesota).

State	2022 Percent Adults In Home With Guns	Giffords Gun Law Grade	2022 Gun Suicide Rate (Per 100,000)	2022 Domestic Violence Firearm Homicide Rate (Per 100,000)	2022 Gun Death Rate (Per 100,000)
Montana (MT)	66%	F	19.7	0.71	23.9
	Gun Laws: Partial mental health record reporting, permitless carry				
Utah (UT)	47%	F	11.3	0.73	13.5
	Gun Laws: Domestic violence gun laws, state database, no default proceed, permitless carry				
Minnesota (MN)	39%	B	7.0	0.38	9.7
	Gun Laws: Assault weapons & ammunition sale regulation, domestic violence & child access prevention laws, handgun permit to purchase, waiting period, disarming procedure, extreme risk protection order, community violence intervention funding, universal background checks				
New York (NY)	15%	A-	2.5	0.17	5.3
	Gun Laws: Universal background check, crisis intervention orders, domestic violence gun laws, gun owner licensing, assault weapon restrictions, large capacity magazine ban, community violence intervention funding, ghost gun law, certain open carry regulations, safe storage laws, minimum purchase age of 21				
U.S. Average	40%	C	8.1	0.54	14.4

Permitless carry is in red because it has been shown to increase violent crime.

Sources: RAND Corp., Giffords, CDC, Gun Violence Archive, Pew Research Center.

Permitless Carry: More Violent Crime

88%

Eighty-eight percent of Americans think you should get a permit before carrying a concealed gun in public.

11%

States that have weakened their firearm permitting systems have experienced an 11% increase in handgun homicides.

83%

Eighty-three percent of gun owners agree that to conceal carry, a gun owner should be required to pass a safety test that demonstrates lawful gun use.

13 to 15%

States that have weakened their firearm permitting systems have experienced a 13-15% increase in violent crime rates.

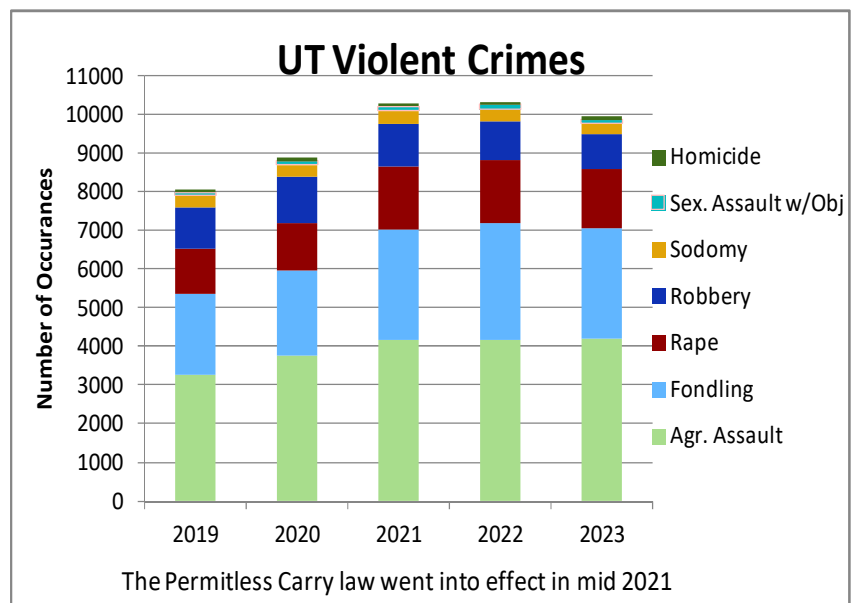
19.6%

Utah saw a 19.6% increase in violent crimes in the two years after Permitless Carry was introduced compared to the two years previous to the new law.

In 2021 the Utah Legislature removed the permitting requirement for carrying a concealed firearm, which eliminated the required training and background checks. Now anyone over 21 in Utah can buy a gun and without any knowledge of state laws or proficiency at handling a gun, can carry the loaded and concealed gun in public. As of 2024, Utah is one of 29 states that now has Permitless Carry.

Why is Permitless Carry dangerous?

- No gun safety training (including safe storage, handling, loading/unloading)
- No gun suicide prevention training
- No live fire training
- No training on Utah's gun laws
- No training in justifiable use of force
- Law enforcement must now assume that everyone they encounter has a concealed weapon



The Result: Utah's incidence of violent crime, which has historically been low, rose 19.6%. Other states adopting Permitless Carry report similar increases in violent crime.

Background Check Loopholes

In the absence of a comprehensive background check system, people who are ineligible to possess firearms routinely exploit the well-known loopholes in firearms laws. Individuals who commit crimes with firearms may intentionally seek to purchase guns from sellers who are not required to run background checks. Recent examples show that the loopholes in our background check system can have deadly consequences.

Although the 2022 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act tightened the definition of gun dealers to try to encompass those selling guns at gun shows and online, many still sell through these outlets without a background check. State laws are the best remedy for these loopholes that allow criminals to easily get guns.

Here are some examples of background check failures that led to gun deaths:

In 2007, a 19 year old gunman shot and killed five shoppers and wounded four others at Trolley Square in Salt Lake City Utah. The underaged killer bought his pistol grip 6-shot 12-gauge pump-action shotgun and 38-caliber handgun without a background check at a local pawn shop.

In 2019, a man fatally shot seven people and wounded 25 others in West Texas. The shooter previously failed a criminal background check when trying to purchase a gun, yet loopholes in our nation's gun laws allowed him to bypass the background check system altogether. He obtained the AR-style weapon used in his deadly attack from an unlicensed seller who was not required to run a background check.

In 2021, a man bought a Ruger AR-556 pistol and killed 10 people in Boulder, Colorado. His history included sudden rages and convictions of misdemeanor assault. He was sentenced to probation for attacking a high-school classmate. Colorado has a universal background check law covering almost all gun sales, but the misdemeanor conviction did not prevent him from buying a weapon, experts said. Had his conviction been a felony, federal law would have barred his purchase. A judge has ruled he is mentally incompetent to stand trial.

In 2022, a man attempted to buy a gun from a licensed seller but did not pass the background check. Soon after, he bought a rifle from an unlicensed seller, who was not required to run a background check, and shot and killed two people at a St. Louis high school.

80%

Around 80% of all firearms acquired for criminal purposes are obtained through transfers from unlicensed sellers.

>4.9 million

Since their introduction in 1994, federal background checks have prevented over 4.9 million guns from landing in unsafe hands.

>35%

Greater than 35% of background check denials involved someone previously convicted of a felony offense.

7X

Purchasers from Armslist.com were nearly 7X more likely to have a firearm-prohibiting criminal record than people attempting to buy guns from licensed dealers.

State Laws: Private Sales Loophole

The best way to ensure that guns are not sold to people prohibited from owning firearms is to require all people to undergo a background check prior to purchase. Federal law requires anyone buying from a federally firearm licensed (FFL) dealer, but not from a private individual, to get a background check. Nineteen states and D.C. (but not Utah) have closed the private sales loophole by requiring purchasers to obtain a background check via a permit to purchase or by requiring a background check at the point of sale. Some states require background checks for certain types of firearms, like handguns or assault weapons, while others require them for all types of firearms – the most comprehensive approach.

Permitting and Background Check Procedures

Background Check Law	Does Utah Have This?	How many other states have this law?	Why this matters...
Private Sales Background Check	No	19 states + D.C.	An estimated 45% of gun owners who acquired a gun online did so without any background check.
Gun License	No	15 states + D.C.	When Connecticut passed a licensing law, its firearm homicide rate decreased by 28% and its firearm suicide rate decreased by 33%.
Waiting Periods	No	13 states + D.C.	Studies show that waiting periods for gun purchases can reduce firearm suicide by 7-11% and firearm homicide by 17 %.
Prohibit Background Check Exemptions	No	25 states + D.C.	Prevents gun owners from skipping a background check in certain circumstances (e.g., Concealed Carry Permit w/in 5 years).
Prohibit Default Proceed	Yes	12 states	Stops a gun sale from automatically proceeding if a background check is not completed in a certain amount of time. This closes the Charleston Loophole. Utah has this good law.

Source: Giffords Law Center.

Armslist and Utah Gun Exchange (UGE)

Online gun exchanges like Armslist connect gun sellers to gun buyers. Armslist operates nationally like a Craigslist for firearms. Like Craigslist, buyers who see a listing of interest click on it and look at the details and photos. A buyer who decides to purchase the firearm contacts the seller. Here’s the disclaimer from the Armslist website: *I understand that ARMSLIST is NEVER involved in transactions between parties and DOES NOT certify, investigate, or in any way guarantee the legal capacity of any party to transact.*

Like Craigslist, there is a “contact seller” button where an interested buyer can message the seller: usually the seller will provide their private email or phone number. The buyer and seller negotiate a price and agree to meet to complete the transaction. **No background check. No record. Usually in cash.**

On October 21, 2024, 18,237 firearms were listed for sale nationwide in Utah by individuals on the Armslist website. Because these sales are by a private seller, no background check will be performed unless the state where the transaction occurs requires it. The private sales loophole also applies at gun shows with a similar lack of background checks. Nineteen states and D.C. (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington) have closed the private sales loophole.

Utah has not closed the private sales loophole. This means that people who are prohibited from purchasing and owning guns (felons, domestic abusers, etc.) can easily purchase a gun here. Utah also has its own Armslist, the Utah Gun Exchange (UGE). The big difference is that the bulk of the sellers are in Utah, making it very easy and convenient for buyers and sellers in Utah to meet, exchange money for guns and for the entire transaction to occur without a background check.

On October 21, 2024 5,562 firearms were listed for sale in Utah on the Utah Gun Exchange site. Over 90% of listed firearms were for sale by a private seller, meaning the buyer could purchase the firearm without a background check. Roughly half of those were handguns, and half were rifles or shotguns. Almost two-thirds (62%) of the guns for sale on UGE were rapid fire, semi-automatic firearms.

5,562


On a single day in Utah in 2024, 5,562 firearms were listed for sale on the UGE.

>90%

More than 90% of Utah Gun Exchange sales are by individuals. Most transactions are completed without a Background Check.

80%

Around 80% of all firearms acquired for criminal purposes are obtained through transfers from unlicensed sellers.

	<p>Custom AR-15 \$1,350.00</p> <p>BUMP THIS AD</p> <p>Price Negotiable?: Yes Phone Number: Click to view Condition: Like new Listing Type: Individual City: Ogden State: Utah Zip/Postal Code: 84404 Local County (e.g. Summit County): Weber Make/Brand: N/A Caliber: 223/556 Terms: Must agree to terms Listed: October 17, 2024 8:47 pm Expires: 56 days, 6 hours</p>	<p>Description by Seller</p> <p>New custom AR only about 90 rounds through it I bought it brand new and decided to build something else it's got red, blue, and green reticles, vertical fore grip, two mags, and the bipod. \$1300 obo not open to trades, cash is best if you have any questions shoot me a text</p>
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Sources: Armslist.com, utahgunexchange.com.

Straw Purchasing, Gun Trafficking and Unscrupulous Dealers

Gun trafficking is the movement of guns from legal to illegal streams of commerce and occurs both within states and across state lines. According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), “Virtually every crime gun in the United States starts off as a legal firearm,” making the need to prevent gun trafficking a crucial part of a comprehensive approach to reducing gun-related crime. Guns are diverted into illegal gun markets in three common ways: **straw purchases; secondary sales through private sellers; and theft from individual gun owners or firearm dealers.**

A **straw purchase** happens when someone lies on an ATF form to purchase a firearm for an individual who is prohibited from owning a gun, does not want to wait for the completion of a background check or does not want their name associated with the transaction. Lying on federal forms to purchase a firearm for someone else is illegal.

A notorious straw-purchase case in Utah ended in the untimely death of University of Utah track star, Lauren McCluskey. A 24-year-old woman purchased the Beretta PX4 Storm .40-caliber handgun from a Salt Lake City Federal Firearm Licensed gun dealer for a 21-year-old man who loaned the gun to Melvin Rowland (who was prohibited from owning a gun because of previous domestic-violence charges). Rowland used it to kill Lauren McCluskey on the University of Utah campus.

Unscrupulous, “bad actor” gun dealers supply the criminal gun market either by intentionally engaging in or being willfully blind in supplying dangerous people with guns, including through: sales to **straw purchasers**; sales to **gun traffickers**; or inadequate security and “off-the-books” sales. It is estimated that about 5% of gun dealers sell 90% of the guns recovered in crime.

In 2020 a Nevada man was charged with purchasing 283 guns, including 147 Glock pistols, in Utah and trafficking them in Las Vegas. Nineteen of those guns were recovered in crimes in California. Utah’s lax gun laws make it an ideal location for criminals looking to traffic guns to states with tighter gun laws.

This chart shows Utah gun dealers who received a Demand 2 letter from the ATF. A short time-to-crime can be an indication of gun trafficking. Many of the dealers on this list are high volume sellers. Although being on the Demand 2 list itself is not an indication of wrongdoing, it is designed to serve as a notice to gun dealers that, for whatever reason, they are being targeted by traffickers. NOTE: These names are unedited as they appear in the ATF’s regulatory data.

Licensee	Business	Address
C-A-L Ranch Stores, Llc	C-A-L Ranch Stores	2735 W 7800 S, West Jordan, 84088
Gallenson And Associates, Inc		166 E 200 S, Salt Lake City, 84111
Gunnies Inc	Gunnies	396 S State St, Orem, 84058
Impact Guns Ogden Llc	Impact Guns	2710 South 1900 West, Ogden, 84401
Impact Guns Salt Lake City Llc	Impact Guns	287 West 2100 South, South Salt Lake, 84115
Scheels All Sports Inc	Scheels	11282 S State St, Sandy, 84070
Sportsman'S Warehouse Inc	Warehouse 114	165 W 7200 S, Midvale, 84047
Sportsman'S Warehouse Inc	Warehouse 102	1075 S University Ave, Provo, 84601
Sportsman'S Warehouse Inc	Warehouse #103	1137 W Riverdale Rd, Riverdale, 84405
Utah'S Greatest Gun Store Inc	Doug'S Shoot'N Sports	4926 S Redwood Rd, Taylorsville, 84123

Sources: KSL.com, ATF.gov, USA Today, KUTV.com, 2023 Demand 2 Letter data via Freedom of Information Act via Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Illegally Transported Firearms in Airports

On commercial flights firearms must be unloaded, locked in a hard-sided container and transported as checked baggage. In 2023 a **record 6,737 firearms** were stopped at TSA checkpoints and **93% of those were loaded**. It is illegal to transport firearms, loaded or unloaded, in carry-on baggage.

Below is a comparison of the Salt Lake City (SLC) airport to the ten airports with the most firearm discoveries in 2023. Although SLC fell off the Top Ten list, their rate of firearm discovery at TSA is in the same range as other, larger airports. Also, the number of firearms discovered at all Utah airports rose again in 2023.

Firearms Seized at TSA Airport Checkpoints		
Year	# Seized in SLC	# Seized in U.S.
2015	48	2,653
2016	75	3,391
2017	81	3,957
2018	79	4,244
2019	92	4,432
2020	71	3,257
2021	115	5,972
2022	115	6,542
2023	110	6,737

Comparison of the Ten Airports with the Most TSA Firearm Discoveries in 2023				
#	Airport	# Firearms Seized	# Million Passengers	Rate per Million
1	Hartsfield Atlanta (ATL)	451	50.95	8.9
2	Dallas/Ft Worth (DFW)	378	39.24	9.6
3	Houston Intercontinental (IAH)	311	22.23	14
4	Phoenix (PHX)	235	24.9	9.4
5	Nashville (BNA)	188	11.23	16.7
6	Denver (DEN)	178	37.87	4.7
7	Orlando (MCO)	164	28.03	5.9
8	Tampa (TPA)	144	11.68	12.3
9	Ft Lauderdale (FLL)	135	17.04	7.9
10	Dallas Love Field (DAL)	125	8.56	14.6
	Salt Lake City (SLC)	110	12.91	8.5

Green = 4-6,
Yellow = 7-10,
Orange/red = 12-17

Sources: TSA.gov, FAA.gov.

Lost and Stolen Firearms

380,000

Each year 380,000 guns are stolen from gun owners in the U.S., less than 240,000 (63%) are reported to the police.

3,453

The total number of firearms recovered and traced in Utah in 2022 was 3,453.

74%

Of guns recovered and traced in Utah in 2022, 74% were crime-related.

7th highest

In 2022 Utah had the 7th highest number in the nation of firearms lost or stolen from federally licensed dealers.

Gun theft is a growing problem across the country. Guns are three times more likely to be stolen if they are carried by the person or in a car. Recent data shows a link between stolen guns and crime.

- Many cities have reported alarming spikes in the number of firearms stolen from cars.
- Of 23,000 stolen firearms recovered by police between 2010 and 2016, the **majority** were recovered in connection with crimes (including **1,500 violent crimes**).
- A Pittsburgh study found that nearly **a third** of firearms recovered at crime scenes had been stolen.

Federal Law **only** requires licensed firearm dealers (FFL) to report loss or theft. Fourteen states (CA, CO, CT, DE, HI, IL, MA, NJ, NY, OH, OR, RI, VA, WA) and D.C. require firearm owners to report loss or theft of any firearm to law enforcement. Michigan (MI) requires firearm thefts to be reported, but not lost firearms. Maryland (MD) requires only lost or stolen handguns and assault weapons to be reported.

Utah does not require firearm owners to report loss or theft of firearms to law enforcement.

In 2022 Utah had the 7th highest number in the nation of firearms lost or stolen from federally licensed dealers.

“There’s a high probability that when we do recover a firearm, it’s going to be found on somebody who might be involved in a crime or being arrested,” a Salt Lake Police Sgt said in 2022. “We were seeing this correlation between both the proliferation of guns, the theft of vehicle burglaries and home burglaries and the improper storage of those guns and then ultimately ending up out in violent crimes,” said Salt Lake County District Attorney Gill.

Laws that require firearm owners to notify law enforcement about the loss or theft of a firearm serve several public safety functions:

- Aid law enforcement in returning lost/stolen guns to their rightful owners
- Encourage gun owners to be more accountable for their weapons
- Help disarm individuals who are ineligible to possess firearms
- Deter gun trafficking and straw purchasing

Utah's Stand Your Ground (SYG) Law

Utah was one of the first states to adopt a self-defense gun law. In 1994 Utah code provided that an individual was justified in using force intended or likely to cause death or serious bodily injury only if the individual reasonably believed that force was necessary to prevent death or serious bodily injury to the individual. In other words, it gave the right to defend themselves with deadly force even outside of their home or property.

This law was amended in 2018 to include that persons who used deadly force in a public altercation would **not** have to prove that they were unable to reasonably retreat, even if there was a safe way to do so. Such a law helped George Zimmerman escape a murder conviction in the 2012 Florida shooting of Trayvon Martin, a black teenager returning to his home from a store.

In 2021, the Utah Legislature amended the law again to require a pre-hearing on all cases where a person claims “self-defense” in a use of force that harms another. The pre-trial hearing would require that the prosecution prove by clear and convincing evidence that the person did not act in self-defense or defense of others. The case would be dismissed otherwise. This new change created an extra hurdle in prosecution of perpetrators of violence, revictimized victims and put judges in the position of making decisions meant for juries.

Before Utah's SYG law was enacted, a person had a duty to retreat if he or she could safely do so.

30-50/month

Thirty to fifty people are estimated to be killed nationally each month due to SYG laws.

11%

States with SYG laws see an 11% increase in homicides.

68%

Sixty-eight percent of SYG victims in Florida were unarmed.

3.5X

Cases of white-on-black homicide were 3.5X more likely to be ruled as justified than cases of white-on-white.

GVPedia provides academic papers on the negative effects of SYG laws.

- An extensive study by McClellan & Tekin (2020, J. Human Resources) found that SYG laws have led to an increase of 35 firearm deaths per month in the U.S.
- Ben Khallouq et al. (2020, J. Am. Coll. Surgeons) concluded that between 2000 and 2017, SYG states saw a 10.8% increase in total homicides, while states without SYG experienced a 2.3% decrease.
- A meta-analysis by Parmar et al. (2021, Am. J. Public Health) confirmed these findings and concluded that SYG laws do not deter crime.
- Morral et al. (2020, Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA) examined state policies from 1970-2016, finding both right-to-carry (RTC) and SYG laws have led to increases in such deaths (about 3% each). If all states had RTC and SYG laws, that would lead to between 2,000 and 3,000 additional deaths.

Guns in Schools

80%

Eighty percent of teachers oppose arming teachers.

70%

Seventy percent of parents and students oppose arming teachers.

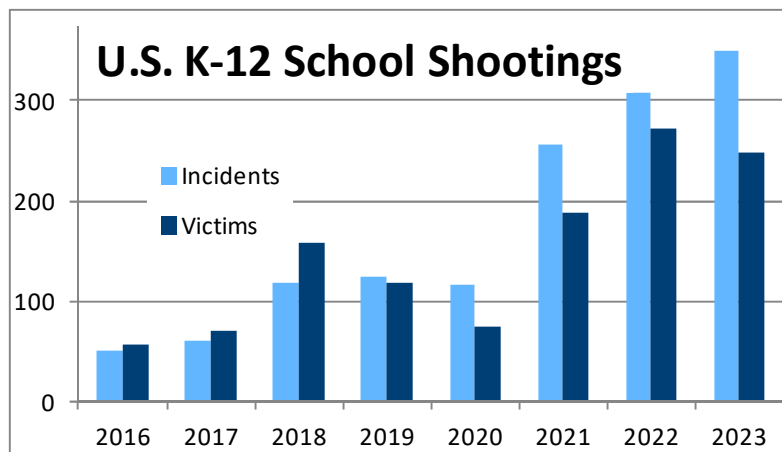
3X

The presence of an armed security guard increased the death rate at school shootings almost 3-fold.

School shootings are some of the most horrifying examples of gun violence in the U.S. The episodes at Columbine (1999, 13 killed), Sandy Hook (2012, 26 killed), Parkland (2018, 17 killed) and Uvalde (2022, 21 killed), where both students and staff were killed are appalling examples. While K-12 shootings have increased sharply in recent years, they still only account for 1.2% of homicides of school-age children.

Many states have responded with laws and regulations intended to provide protection against these occurrences, and some have favored arming teachers in the classroom.

In 2024 Utah's State Legislature passed a law that provides liability protection to teachers or other school employees who bring firearms to school if they are part of the Educator-Protector program and if the firearm is either carried concealed or stored in a biometric gun safe. The program requires teachers to participate once a year in a firearm safety program. The explicit purpose of this law is to incentivize teachers to have a firearm on school grounds by removing the teacher's liability in the event that the firearm is used to inflict harm. This includes cases in which an innocent student or staff member is killed by the teacher.



There is no evidence that arming teachers increases school safety. To expect teachers, after a few hours of training, to respond as professionally as law enforcement officers who receive hundreds of hours of training, is unrealistic.

The presence of guns in any location increases the likelihood that gun violence will occur. A study of 133 school shootings between 1980 and 2019 found that the presence of armed guards at schools increased the death rate almost 3-fold. "The well-documented weapons effect explains that the presence of a weapon increases aggression. Since many school shooters are actively suicidal, intending to die in the act, an armed officer may be an incentive rather than a deterrent." (RAND report)

In various surveys, law enforcement officers, teachers, students and the public oppose arming teachers by large margins. When asked, students respond that the prospect of arming teachers makes them feel less safe and more stressed.

Sources: k12ssdb.org, RAND.

Safe Storage Prevents Youth Firearm Suicides

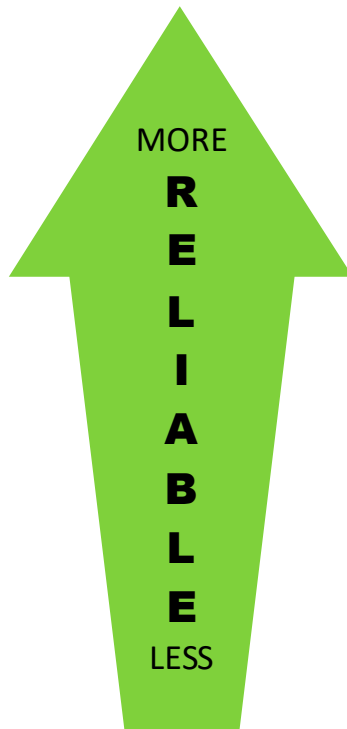


Firearm suicides are on the rise among children and teens nationally and in Utah. Data from the National Violent Injury Statistics System reveal that most adolescent suicide victims die by suicide at their home with a firearm owned by a parent.

According to 2022 data from the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, **firearms were involved in 47% of all suicides among young people 10 – 19 years old in the U.S.**

In Utah, firearm suicide rates for youth have increased 66% since 2009. Research indicates that most of the young people used a gun from home - a gun they had easy access to.

A law requiring the safe storage of firearms could not only reduce the number of unintentional shootings involving kids, and it could reduce the number of Utah tweens and teens using a gun to take their own lives.



Biometric Gun Safe

Gun Safe

Biometric Lock Box

Lock Box

Trigger Lock

Cable Lock

Unlocked

Safe Storage Laws in Utah

According to Giffords Law Center, Utah does not have any state laws requiring persons purchasing a firearm to safely store the firearm in their home. Nor does Utah law require a locking device to accompany the sale of a firearm.

Some effort has been made to distribute free cable locks to Utah gun owners, but these locks are inadequate because they can be easily and quickly opened. Gun owners who are serious about their family's safety use a gun safe accessible only by responsible adults.

Guns should be stored locked and unloaded with ammunition stored separately. Lock boxes or safes that open with the owner's fingerprint or RFID smart tags are considered the most reliable.

Child Access Prevention

36%

Thirty-six percent of households with both firearms and children (18 or under) had guns stored unlocked, 15% of those had guns that were both unlocked and loaded.

No Effect

Gun safety training had no effect on what a child would do if they came across a gun.

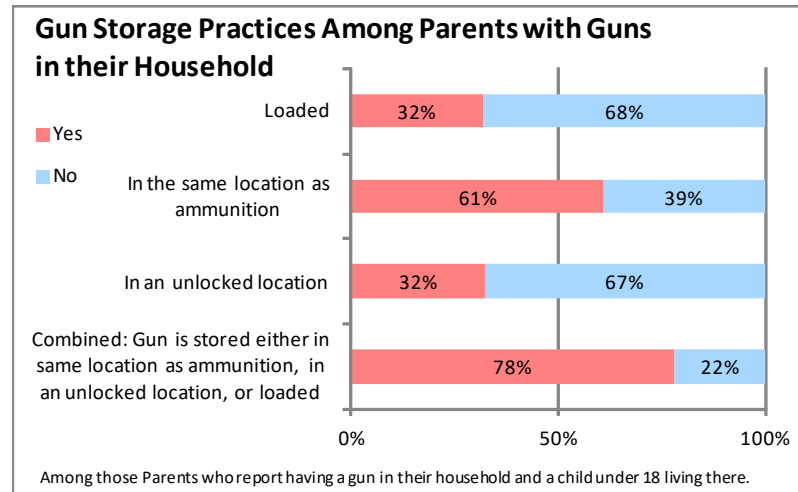
37%

In households where parents reported their guns were securely stored, 37% of adolescents reported being able to access a household gun in less than an hour; 22% said they could access the gun in 5 minutes.

75%

Between 2004 and 2015 over three-quarters of youth suicides involved guns accessed from the home that were both unlocked and loaded.

An estimated 30 million children in the U.S. live in households with guns. Guns in homes pose a clear risk to the safety of children, especially when guns are not stored safely or securely. Tragic unintentional shootings and youth suicides occur far too often.



Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws hold gun owners accountable for the safe storage of their firearms. Such laws help prevent guns from falling into young hands. A RAND review of recent literature showed that CAP laws have proven to be effective at reducing the incidence of:

- youth suicides and self-injury
- violent crime (homicides and assaults)
- unintentional injuries and death from guns

Strong CAP laws were associated with a significant reduction in all self-inflicted and unintentional pediatric firearm injuries.

Gun Safety Programs: In 2017, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report on programs that promote safe storage of firearms. The report found that informational sessions “did not instill consistent safe firearm habits in young children.” The NRA’s Eddie Eagle program succeeded at getting children between the ages of 4 and 6 to orally repeat rules on what to do when they encounter a gun. A follow-up study showed that these trained children were no more likely than untrained children to follow through with what they had been taught when they encountered a gun.

Teaching children about gun safety is important, but it is in no way a substitution for securing guns and making them inaccessible to unauthorized users, especially curious kids.

Sources: Giffords Law Center, RAND, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, kff.org.

Child Access Prevention Laws Compared

The strongest CAP laws impose criminal liability when a firearm is knowingly stored in a place a minor could access, regardless of whether the minor gains access (see Strong CAP Laws below).

The weakest laws prohibit certain persons, such as parents or guardians, from directly providing a firearm to a minor (see Weak CAP laws below). In Utah parents may be guilty for providing firearms to children only when they know of a substantial risk that the minor will use the firearm to commit a crime.

As time goes by more states are adopting strong CAP laws.

States That Impose Criminal Liability When A Child Gains Access to Gun	
Strong CAP Laws	Weak CAP Laws
Apply to Negligent Storage when the person “knows or reasonably should know” that a child may gain access to the firearm.	Apply only to Intentional, Knowing or Reckless Provision of Firearms to Minors.
CA, CO, CT, D.C., DE, FL, IL, IA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OR, TX, VA, VT, WA, WI	GA, IN, KY, MS, MO, OK, PA, TN, UT

Two recent instances where teens brought guns from home and shot and killed teachers and students, and their parents were charged under CAP laws:

In 2021 a 15 year old brought a semi-automatic handgun from home to Oxford High in Michigan. He shot and killed 4 students and injured 8 others, including one teacher. He was found guilty and is serving a life sentence. His parents were charged with involuntary manslaughter for failing to secure the handgun used in the crimes. They are serving 10-15 years in prison.

In 2024 a 14 year old brought a semi-automatic rifle from home and shot and killed 2 students and 2 teachers at Apalachee High School in Georgia. Seven others were injured. He is being charged with 4 counts of felony murder. His father is also being charged with second degree murder and involuntary manslaughter because he bought his son the gun used in the shooting.

It is interesting that most states, including Utah, have a provision for the safe storage of firearms in foster care homes. If this law is good for children in foster care, why not for all Utah children?

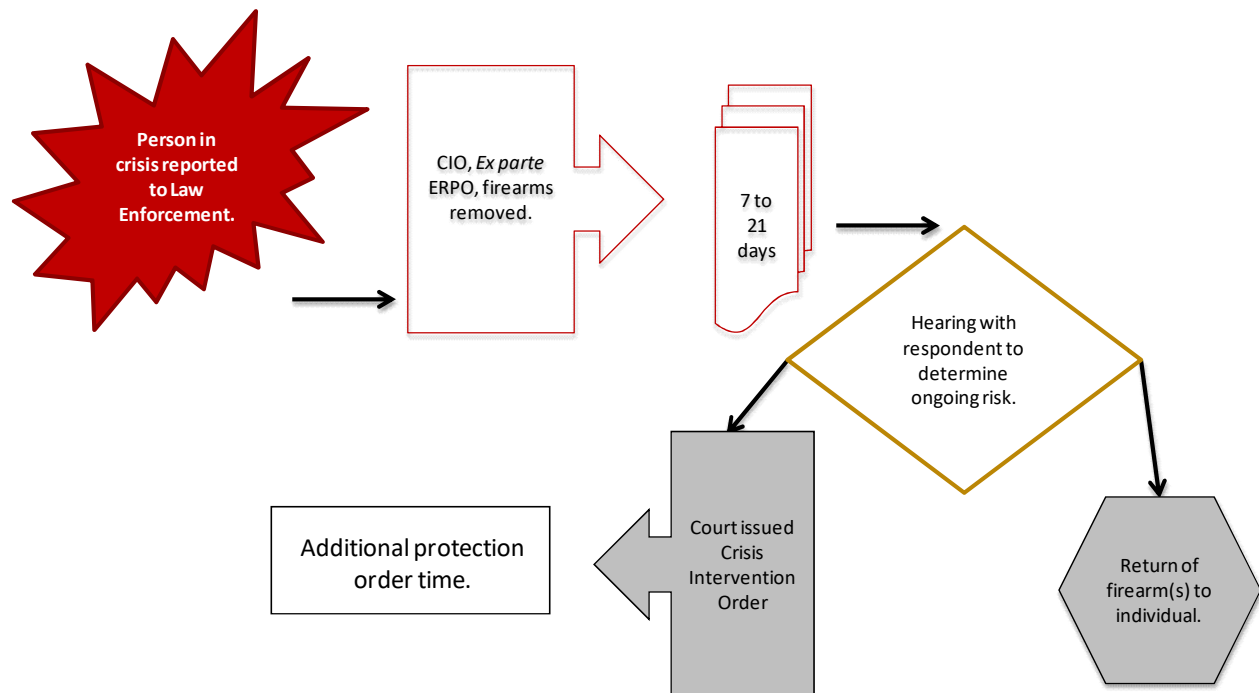
Crisis Intervention Orders (CIO)

Crisis Intervention Orders, also known as Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO) or Red Flag Laws, empower families and law enforcement to prevent gun tragedies by allowing them to petition a court to temporarily remove guns from individuals who exhibit an elevated risk of endangering themselves or others. Under a Crisis Intervention Order people in crisis situations are temporarily prohibited from purchasing or accessing firearms and must relinquish any guns they possess while the order is in effect.

CIOs are modeled on well-established systems of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Protection Orders with careful considerations for due process and standards for evidence. CIO laws allow intervention *ex parte* before the respondent has appeared before judge or other adjudicator, a common lifesaving practice with other types of protection orders, particularly in the realm of domestic violence. CIOs can save lives while ensuring critical legal protections for respondents.

If a court finds that an individual poses an imminent threat to themselves or others, it may issue an *ex parte* CIO that lasts for a limited period of time, usually between 7 and 21 days. After a hearing at which the respondent has the opportunity to appear, the court may extend the CIO for a longer period if the court finds that the respondent poses a significant ongoing danger. The process includes penalties for those who bring false or frivolous charges.

Twenty-one states and D.C. have adopted some version of the CIO, and the Safer Communities Act has provisions to incentivize states to adopt this life-saving measure that helps prevent suicides, domestic violence homicides and mass shootings.



Crisis Intervention Orders: Success in Other States

In Colorado, just over a third of Crisis Intervention Orders (CIO's) were issued after people made threats of suicide and another third after people threatened to kill others, according to court records. The remainder included cases with threats of both suicide and homicide, or cases in which reckless use of a gun was considered likely. Some CIO's require a mental health evaluation as part of the judge's orders and provide entry into mental health treatment.

After the third time a Colorado man made serious threats of killing himself, his wife sought a CIO to keep him from legally purchasing another gun. Her husband agreed it was a good idea and did not fight the protection order. His wife credits the law as part of the reason he's still alive.

Crisis Intervention Orders have been shown to be extremely effective at preventing firearm suicides.

In Connecticut, suicide rates decreased by 14% after enactment of CIO legislation.

Indiana saw a 7.5% drop in its suicide rates when a CIO was adopted.

With Utah's high rate of gun suicide, a CIO law would have a significant impact on the state's gun suicide mortality rates. Although this law has been supported by lawmakers of both parties, the gun lobby has thwarted its passage.

States are also successfully using these laws to temporarily disarm individuals who have made significant and credible threats of violence.

At least four individuals who made threats of violence against schools were disarmed in the first three months after Maryland implemented its crisis intervention law.

Similarly, CIO laws have been used to remove firearms from a Florida resident who said that murder would be "fun and addicting" and a Vermont resident who kept a diary titled "Journal of an Active Shooter."

Washington State used its CIO law to disarm the leader of an organized Neo-Nazi hate group who was training to wage a "race war" with a cache of military-style weapons.

The following 21 states have adopted CIO legislation: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, D.C., Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington.

Sources: Giffords Law Center, Deseret News.

72%

Seventy-two percent of Utahns, including gun owners and people of both major parties, support CIOs.

15

For every 15 firearm removals under Connecticut's and Indiana's crisis intervention laws, a life was saved through an averted suicide.

58

From 2016 to 2018 there were 58 cases of people threatening mass shootings in California where CIO's were used to disarm those people.

14%

In Connecticut, suicide rates decreased by 14% after enactment of CIO legislation.

Expanded Background Checks

4.9 million

Since 1994, almost five million gun sales have been legally prohibited because of our background check system.

42%

Forty-two percent of denials involved people with felony offenses.

89%

Eighty-nine percent of both gun owners and non-gun owners support expanded background checks.

30%

States without expanded background check laws export guns used in crimes across state lines at a 30% higher rate than states that require background checks on all gun sales.

During the Pandemic years of 2020-2022, Utah had the 3rd highest gun sale rate among the states, based on FBI background checks. These record numbers did not take into account the guns that were sold without background checks through private sales (via the Utah Gun Exchange) and at gun shows.

Background checks that are required and properly enforced help to keep guns out of dangerous hands and to prevent guns from being diverted to the illegal-gun market.

Background checks are easy and convenient and impose almost no burden on law-abiding gun purchasers.

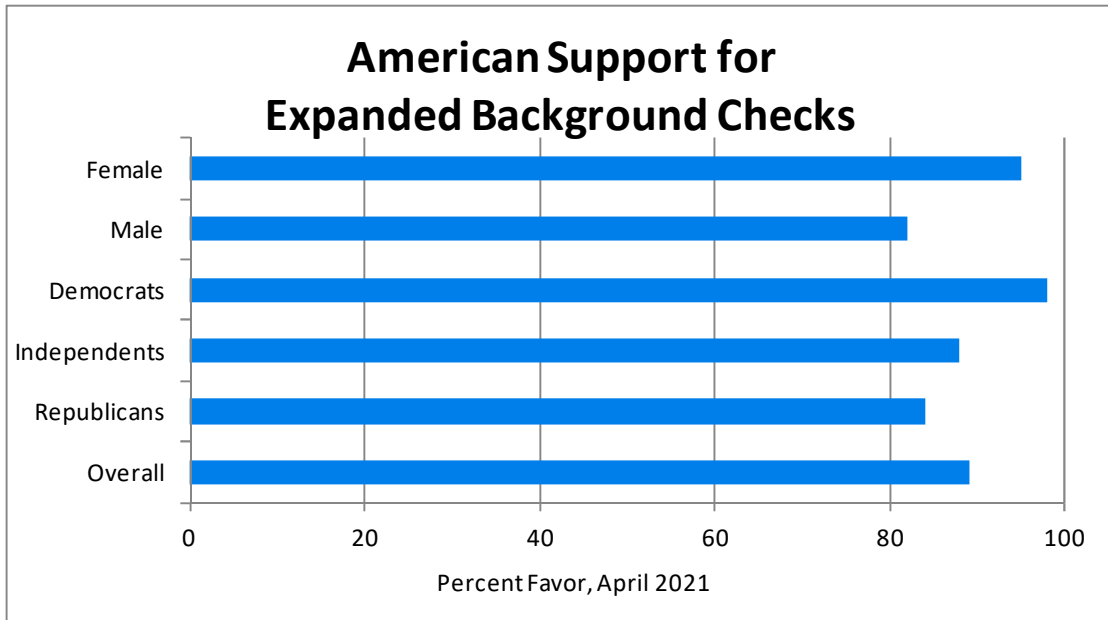
- In at least 90% of cases, firearm background checks processed through the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) are resolved immediately. The average processing time for a NICS check is less than two minutes.
- Contrary to gun-lobby claims, background checks rarely provide false-positive results. The FBI's quality control evaluations suggest that background checks are accurate over 99% of the time.

For more than a decade, the vast majority of the American public has supported laws requiring background checks on all firearm purchases. At least 69% of NRA members support comprehensive background checks.

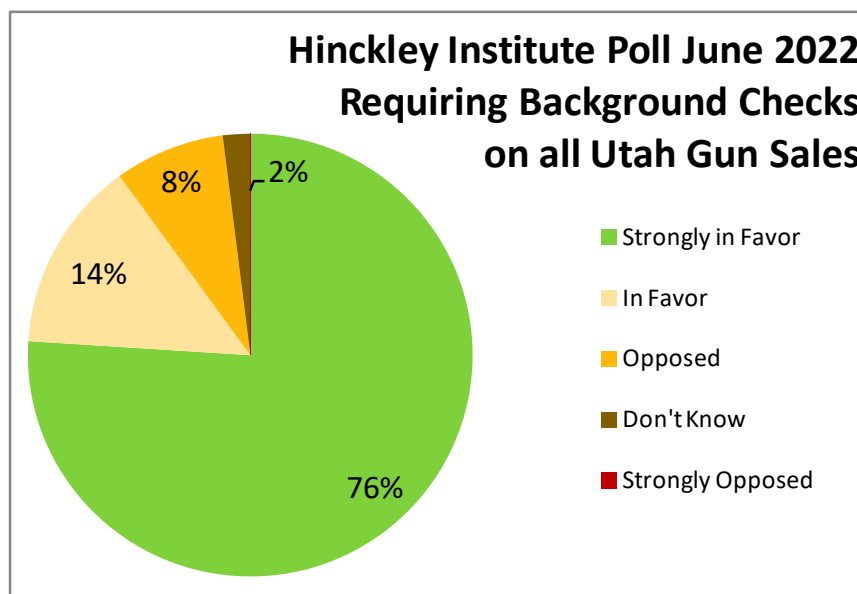
The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act was passed by the U.S. Congress in 2022. The Act now requires all gun purchasers under the age of 21 to undergo an expanded background check when buying from a federally licensed dealer. These new background checks include checking the databases of local law enforcement to see if the purchaser has a juvenile record that would disqualify them from owning a gun.

Support for Expanded Background Checks in Utah and the U.S.

Americans and Utahns support expanding background checks to include *all* gun sales. In a Quinnipiac poll conducted in April, 2021, 89% of Americans favored expanded background checks.



In 2022, polling conducted by The Hinckley Institute found that 90% of Utahns support background checks on all gun sales.



Sources: Washington Post, ABC News, Deseret News, Hinckley Institute.

Bipartisan Safer Communities Act

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) was passed in 2022. This historic bipartisan legislation was the first major federal legislation addressing gun violence in nearly three decades. The bill covers the following measures:

- 1. Funding for evidence-based Community Violence Intervention (CVI) programs.** Community violence intervention programs focus on reducing homicides and shootings by establishing relationships with people at the center of gun violence in our communities. These programs support people at the highest risk of being victims or perpetrators—or both—of violence. There are three main types of CVI's: A) Hospital-based Violence Interruption Programs (HVIPs) reach survivors of violence in the hospital. B) Group Violence Interventions are collaborations among community leaders, social service providers, and law enforcement. C) Community Centered Violence Intervention employs “violence interrupters” or “neighborhood change agents” who are skilled in intervention and supporting people on their change journeys.
- 2. Funding for increased mental health services in schools and communities.** Federal funding for school, rural and first responder mental health services have come to Utah through the BSCA. Utah’s youth suicide rate has flattened; however, teachers and social service providers say that additional resources are still needed.
- 3. Enhancing background checks for firearm buyers aged 18-20.** An additional layer of background check scrutiny has been added for anyone 18-20 years old who is buying a long gun (this includes assault weapons) from a FFL. In addition to the normal check, the juvenile justice and mental health records are searched. This only applies to long guns; people under 21 are prohibited from buying handguns.
- 4. Clarifying existing law on who is in the business of selling firearms and who must run a background check.** The BSCA's definition of "engaged in the business" means that many people who previously sold firearms as private parties are now required to obtain a federal firearms license (FFL) and perform background checks for each gun sale. This includes previously unlicensed sellers who sell guns at gun shows or online through outlets like the Utah Gun Exchange, where most gun sales occur without background checks.
- 5. Cracking down on gun trafficking with new laws for interstate sales and straw purchases.** Federal law directly prohibits straw purchasing and firearms trafficking across state lines and significantly enhances the penalties for those crimes. The maximum penalty for straw purchasing is 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. If the weapon is used in a felony, act of terrorism, or drug trafficking crime, the penalty increases to up to 25 years in prison.
- 6. Expanding the convicted domestic abuser prohibition on guns to dating partners.** Specifically, this expansion of the law prohibits a person convicted of a violent misdemeanor against a “current or recent former dating” partner from possessing firearms for five years.
- 7. Funding for violence intervention and training programs in schools:** grant funding to implement crisis intervention teams and hire school support personnel such as school-based violence interrupters and to improve school security by providing students and teachers with the tools they need to recognize, respond quickly to, and prevent acts of violence.
- 8. Funding for the next five years to assist states in establishing and implementing crisis intervention orders (Red Flag laws).** BSCA authorizes the use of federal grant funding by states and localities for the implementation of state crisis intervention court proceedings and related programs or initiatives, including mental health courts, drug courts, veteran courts, and extreme risk protection order programs.

A Comparison of Gun Violence to Other Public Health Issues

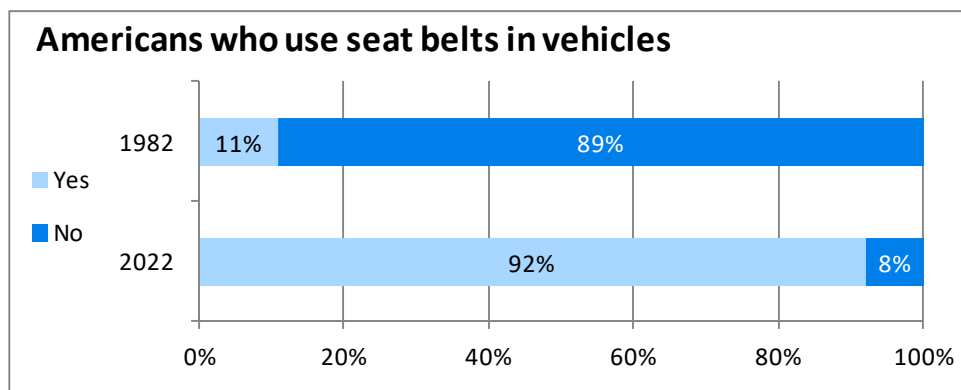
Public health is “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private communities and individuals.” (C.E.A. Winslow.) In 2022, firearm deaths were the single leading cause of death for youths aged 0-19 in the U.S.

2022 U.S. NIH Estimates of Funding for Various Research and Disease Categories		
Research/Disease Area	U.S. Deaths	Research Dollars per Death
Lyme Disease	99	\$505,100
Cystic Fibrosis	325	\$283,100
Eating Disorders	287	\$191,600
Inflammatory Bowel Disease	4,836	\$40,300
Crohn's Disease	2,976	\$28,200
Asthma	15,319	\$18,600
Brain Cancer	55,668	\$13,300
Lymphoma	29,658	\$10,200
Opioid Misuse/Addiction	83,473	\$9,600
Alcoholism	105,308	\$5,822
Colo-Rectal Cancer	64,379	\$5,400
Liver Cancer	32,869	\$5,400
Parkinson's Disease	61,127	\$4,200
Firearms	48,305	\$400

In addition, suicide and homicide rank in the top 4 causes of death among Americans aged 1-44. Suicide is most successfully carried out with a gun, and in 2022 79% of homicides were completed with a gun.

As a nation, how have we responded to the public health issues presented in this data? Between 1996 and 2020 the Dickey Amendment prohibited using Federal funds to study gun violence prevention. Thus, 25 years of research and data into gun violence were lost. Since 2020, research has begun to be funded, but the amounts being invested pale compared to other public health issues of similar scope.

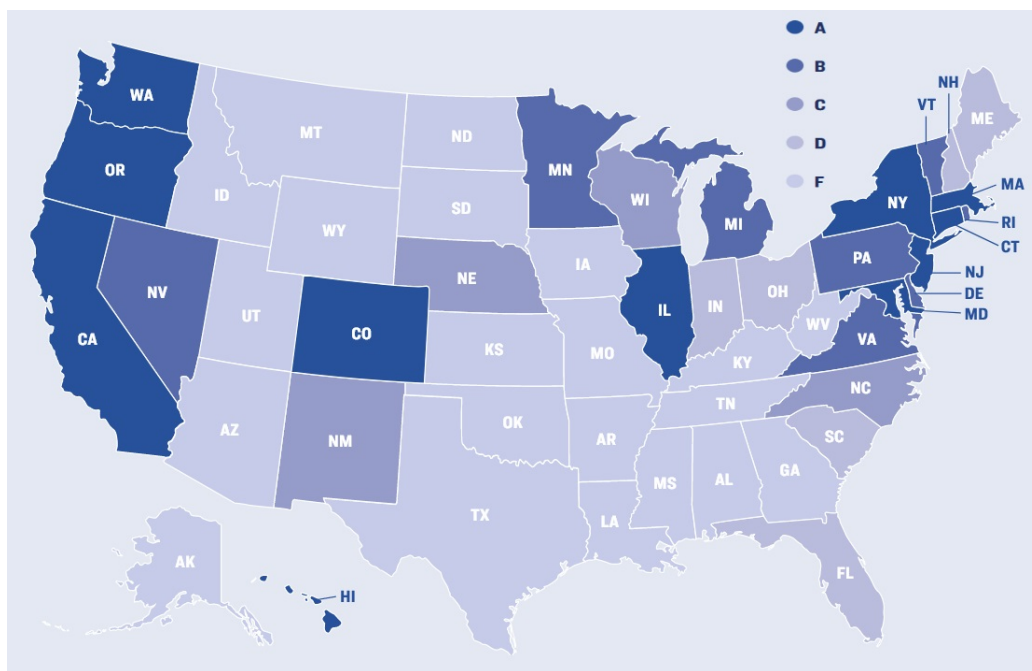
In 2024 the U.S. Surgeon General stated, “Firearm violence is an urgent public health crisis... We don’t have to subject our children to the ongoing horror of firearm violence in America.”



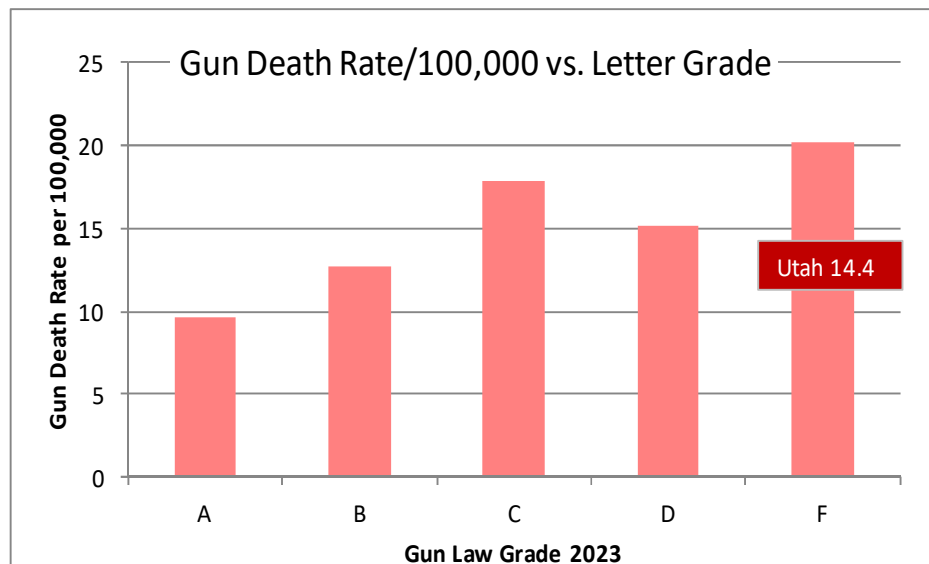
Using a public health approach, the number of deaths in the U.S. due to auto accidents was drastically reduced by the adoption of seat belt laws. Seat belts were required to be installed in new passenger vehicles in the U.S. starting in 1968. By the mid-1990’s, all states, except New Hampshire, required vehicle occupants to use seatbelts. Gun deaths have been rising and now exceed vehicle deaths annually in the country and in Utah.

Firearm Mortality Rate and Gun Law Grades

In its grading system, Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gives states with strong gun laws an A grade, while the weakest are given an F. States with A grades have implemented laws such as expanded background checks, crisis intervention orders, durable firearm relinquishment and stringent requirements to obtain a gun permit. Firearm mortality includes all forms of fatal gun violence: homicides, suicides and unintentional shooting deaths. Both the gun death rates and gun grades are for 2023, the most recent year gun death data is available. States with stronger gun laws tend to have lower gun death rates.



Gifford’s Law Center changed Utah’s grade to an F in 2021. Two changes to Utah’s gun laws are responsible for the downgrading. The first was the passage of the Permitless Carry bill that was signed into law in 2021 by Governor Cox. This bill took away the requirement for persons to undergo training and a background check in order to conceal carry a firearm. The second was the 2021 change to Utah’s Stand Your Ground law which made it even easier to shoot and kill someone without legal repercussions.



Source: Giffords Law Center.

Summary

The information provided in this report establishes that gun violence in Utah and the United States is a major health and safety problem—one involving more annual deaths than vehicle fatalities. The depth and breadth of the data in this report quantify the levels of lives lost to gun violence, and they also show that society has the available means to address the problems and reduce the violence and its effects.

As the number of gun purchases has increased in recent years, both the numbers of firearm deaths and the rates per 100,000 population have been steadily increasing in Utah and the U.S.

- Firearms are used in more than half of all suicides in the United States, with a disproportionate impact on teens, young adults, older men and veterans. Suicide is the leading cause of gun deaths in Utah among both youths and adults. As experience in other states has shown, adoption of measures that reduce easy access to guns could cut the risk of suicide deaths by as much as two thirds.
- Similarly, action by national and state governments could result in a major reduction in gun-related domestic violence homicide that affects millions of Americans and their children every year. The rate of such deaths in Utah exceeds the national average. Adoption of durable relinquishment laws and closing the private sales loophole could reduce domestic-violence homicides by an intimate partner and protect the millions of Americans who are injured or threatened with a gun by an intimate partner.
- Youth gun violence cuts lives short and causes debilitating injuries and devastation to families and friends. Over 4,500 minors are killed by guns in the U.S. annually, and 3.6 million children are directly exposed to gun violence. Safe storage or removal of guns from homes where children are at increased risk would significantly reduce these tragedies.
- The U.S. experiences 13 mass shootings per week, a devastating statistic directly related to the easy availability of firearms and the absence of effective background checks and Crisis Intervention Orders that would deter dangerous individuals.
- Unintentional shooting deaths continue to occur at unacceptable levels—most often involving people under age 24 shooting someone their own age. More states are requiring safety training for handling firearms or safe storage of firearms especially in homes with children. Utah has not adopted these life-saving measures.

The level of gun violence in the U.S. is a phenomenon our peer nations cannot comprehend. Yet, as the information laid out in this report demonstrates, the means exist to combat and reduce the violence if we choose to do so.

Gun Violence Prevention Center of Utah – Who are we? What do we do?

Our Mission is to prevent the tragedy of gun violence through education and reasonable regulation of firearms.

Who we are: The Gun Violence Prevention Center (GVPC) is the Utah state affiliate of States United to Prevent Gun Violence (SUPGV), the only national organization that supports independent state-led gun violence prevention. GVPC is a non-partisan 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to providing education and information on the incidence of gun violence and the policies that effectively deter it. Our organization bases its policy positions on facts, statistics and measured data that are obtained from well-established research groups across the country. We work on the premise that it is possible for our society to take substantial action against the misuse of guns and still maintain the ability of citizens to own and possess firearms for legitimate recreational purposes and self-defense. GVPC is built on the philosophy that reasonable regulation of firearms can lead to significant reduction of gun violence.

Salt Lake City architect and artist Ron Molen and his wife Norma founded the organization Utahns Against Gun Violence in 1994 after their son was shot and killed at Indiana University while defending a friend. In 2001, they and a group of other concerned citizens who believed that we needed to and could do far more to protect society from the misuse of guns, formed the successor organization, Gun Violence Prevention Center of Utah (GVPC).

GVPC website: gvpc.org

SUPGV website: supgv.org

Facebook: Gun Violence Prevention Center of Utah

Instagram: [@utahgvpc](https://www.instagram.com/utahgvpc)

Email: info@gvpc.org

Board Chair: Terri Gilfillan, utahsaluki@gmail.com

Vice Chair and Legislative Liaison: Neca Allgood, neca@mooregoodideas.com

Communication Director: Nancy Halden, nfhalden@gmail.com

What We Do:

- Educate Utahns about the merits of moderate gun-violence prevention measures.
- Research gun violence statistics and gun safety legislation and coordinate and network with other states' gun violence prevention (GVP) organizations in the States United coalition.
- Testify and provide information in the Utah State Legislative Hearings.
- Sponsor and coordinate events to bring awareness of gun violence.
- Co-Host the Annual GVP Vigil (December).
- Provide a disarming service in conjunction with RawTools for individuals who no longer want or need a gun and do not want it to fall into unsafe hands.
- Collect and deliver written constituent comments to legislators.
- Speak and participate in community organization meetings and events.
- Provide information and GVP statistics to state and federal legislators.
- Coordinate support and advocacy with other organizations concerned about gun violence through the Utah Gun Safety Coalition.
- Write letters to the editor and editorial opinion pieces.
- Provide information and advocacy education to supporters through social media and GVPC's webpage.

Acknowledgments

An Issue of Public Health and Safety: Utah Gun Violence Report was inspired by Beth Joslin Roth at our affiliate organization, Safe Tennessee. She single-handedly collected national and state-specific gun violence data for Tennessee and compiled it, then generously let us use her formatting and national data. Without her inspiration and hard work, this book would not have been possible. Our first edition was published during the pandemic with amazing support from our intern at the time, Tommy Munroe. Our goal is to update this book every two years to keep abreast of current numbers and trends in gun violence on both the national and state levels.

For this edition we are especially grateful to our intern, Jaden Gamache, to our volunteers, Suellen Riffkin, for graphics and formatting, to Dana Carroll for extensive research and content, and to the board members of the Gun Violence Prevention Center of Utah who made suggestions, researched topics and painstakingly edited this report. We also thank Yanling Shi at the Office of Vital Records and Statistics at the Utah Department of Health and Human Services for help with data on Utah gun violence. We have added some new content and hope that this will serve as a valuable resource for our state as we work together for a safer, healthier Utah.