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Michigan State Police

STATE OF MICHIGAN

Use & Storage of a Firearm in a  
Home Environment



AUTHORITY:  
[2000 P.A. 265; MCL 28.435](#)

Michigan Department of State Police

Firearm ownership carries with it a responsibility of safeguarding the welfare of others and you when handling firearms. Accident prevention is the user's responsibility. It is the responsibility of a firearm owner to know what the law is pertaining to ownership, possession, transportation and use of firearms.

It is advisable to have a serious discussion with family members concerning a firearm and stressing the danger of careless or unsafe use.

A basic rule in firearm safety is to never assume that a firearm is unloaded. You should treat every firearm as if it were loaded.

A firearm should always be unloaded when not in use and the ammunition stored separately from the firearm. It is generally recommended that the cylinder assembly of a revolver and the barrel assembly of a semi-automatic be removed from the frame for long-term storage. Both the ammunition and the firearm should be stored in a safe place out of the reach of children.

You may be criminally and civilly liable for any harm caused by a person less than 18 years of age who lawfully gains unsupervised access to your firearm if unlawfully stored. As such, a trigger lock, gun case or other device designed to prevent unauthorized access to a firearm is strongly recommended.

The improper storage of a firearm at home could result in the arming of a criminal breaking into the home or the injury or death of a child who discovers the firearm and plays with it.

Discharging a firearm at a range without proper ear and eye protection could result in permanent damage to those senses.

For the safety of you and others, be sure the barrel is clear of any obstructions before shooting. Obstructions such as snow, dirt, excess grease or lubricating oil in the bore may cause increased pressures, which could damage the firearm and cause injury.

On a semi-automatic firearm, you should keep the safety on and/or action open unless firing.

Never put your finger on the trigger until ready to fire at a proper target. A proper target is knowing what is beyond the target and in the line of fire.

You should always keep the barrel pointed in a safe direction, even when dry firing, loading or unloading. In the event of an accidental discharge, no injury can occur if the barrel is pointed in a safe direction.

Dropping a loaded firearm may cause an accidental discharge, even with the safety on.

Bullets can glance off many surfaces like rocks, the surface of water and other surfaces. Glancing bullets travel in unpredictable directions with considerable velocity capable of causing injury or death.

The law requires a person to report the theft of a firearm to police within 5 days of having knowledge of the theft.

Alcoholic beverages and controlled substances should be avoided when using firearms. Possession and use of firearms while under the influence is unlawful and constitutes a reckless disregard for safety.

It is a felony crime to: (a) discharge a firearm in a facility or from a motor vehicle, snowmobile or off road vehicle in a manner as to endanger the safety of another person; (b) discharge a firearm at a facility that is a dwelling or an occupied structure.