



## **CRIME PREVENTION NOTICE**

### **SECURING FIREARMS**

**FACT:** The crime of residential burglary can occur at any time during a home owner's absence. More and more criminals are finding and stealing firearms (handguns) when burglarizing homes. While all property belonging to a home owner is important, the fact that firearms (handguns) can be easily found and removed during a burglary is of particular concern.

**PREVENTION:** The following are crime prevention considerations regarding securing a firearm in the home:

- **Residential burglary often occurs during the daylight hours.** Criminals find empty homes and neighborhoods due to people being at work, running errands, etc. Fewer potential witnesses provide a better opportunity for the criminal.
- **Homeowners should make sure that any firearm they own has been obtained or purchased legally and is registered in accordance with applicable state and local laws.**
- **Firearms are a targeted item of theft during a residential burglary.** Obtaining a firearm may be the main motive of the burglar.
- **Never leave an unsecured firearm in a vehicle.**
- **Firearms that are easily accessible to the homeowner are easily accessible to the burglar.** Burglars know the common hiding spots and will take the time to search the house to locate the firearm if they want it badly enough.
  - Common places homeowners keep firearms include:
    - Master bedroom night stands.
    - Dresser drawers.
    - Under the mattress or in a closet.
    - Other places of storage in a home may be of individual preference to the homeowner, usually based upon their anticipation of needing to retrieve their firearm during a dangerous or threatening situation. For example, in the bathroom.
- **Unsecured firearms that fall into the hands of the criminal pose a threat to the homeowner if they come home and interrupt the burglary.** Stolen firearms end up on the street and in the hands of criminals who use them to commit a variety of other crimes.

**SECURING TECHNIQUES:** Homeowners should store firearms in a manner consistent with safety and theft prevention. Gun safes/cabinets or other safe firearm storage options can be implemented by the homeowner. Visit a gun store or a gun safe showroom to learn your options. Ask questions about security and fire levels of protection.

- Trigger or cable locks should be present on all stored firearms.
- Do not leave an unsecured firearm inside a vehicle.
- Be especially careful about children and guns. Make sure children understand the seriousness of playing with guns and the accidents that can happen.
  - ✓ Always assume a gun is loaded.
  - ✓ Never point a gun at someone in jest or playing.

This flyer was developed in conjunction with and is endorsed by the following law enforcement agencies:

- Erie County District Attorney's Office
- Erie County Sheriff's Office
- City of Erie Bureau of Police
- Millcreek Township Police Department

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