

FIREARMS ACCESSIBLE TO MINORS CONSIDERATIONS

The conviction of Jennifer Crumbley, mother of Ethan Crumbley, for the [involuntary manslaughter](#) of four students at Oxford High School in November 2021 will likely bring renewed attention to any person's failure to secure firearms from minors appropriately.

As law enforcement agencies work diligently to prepare for mass shooting incidents, especially at educational institutions, it's essential to know that a 2019 study found that 76% of school shootings are committed with guns from the home.¹ The Chief of Police should also be aware that on January 25, 2024, the U.S. Department of Education announced they would be mailing a letter to every school principal in the United States urging them to implement a strategy to encourage the safe storage of firearms.²

In light of the significant media attention focusing on this issue and the announcement from the U.S. Department of Education, we have provided some considerations for the Chief of Police:

1. Read the letter being sent to school principals and administrators from the U.S. Department of Education. This letter can be viewed [here](#).
2. Read the parent letter template developed by the U.S. Department of Education for local principals and educators to help parents understand the importance of securing firearms in the home. This letter can be viewed [here](#).
3. Proactively contact your local school principals or superintendents to discuss what actions they are taking concerning this issue. Many law enforcement agencies likely have robust programs to educate their community about responsible gun storage. Chiefs of Police might wish to work with their local educators to provide a collaborative message.
4. Review the newly published U.S. Department of Justice document, [Safe Storage of Firearms](#), and determine if it's helpful to the agency's firearms safety initiatives.
5. Review the recently developed resource from the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) concerning firearms storage and for veterans, especially those in crisis.
6. Evaluate the agency's current policy concerning the safe storage of an officer's duty and personal firearms while ensuring the procedures meet the minimum requirements of [2C:58-15](#), as appropriate. Utilize the heightened media attention and the new focus on schools as an opportunity to reinforce agency policy.
7. Incorporate the safe storage of firearms into the agency's safety and wellness program, including, if applicable, family orientation or family safety and wellness programs.

If you have any questions, please contact your Law Enforcement Risk Control Consultant.

¹National Threat Assessment Center, (2019). Protecting America's Schools: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence. U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.

https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/Protecting_Americas_Schools.pdf

²The White House. (2014, January 25). *White House Announces New Action to Promote Safe Storage of Firearms*.

Retrieved from The White House:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/01/25/white-house-announces-new-actions-to-promote-safe-storage-of-firearms/#:~:text=The%20Administration%20urged%20states%20to,up%20being%20used%20for%20violence.>