



National Safety Council

Position/Policy Statement

Children and Firearms

The National Safety Council is chartered to work toward the prevention of accidents and promotion of public health and safety. Therefore, the Council is concerned about firearms safety. While most casualties from firearms are caused by the criminal or suicidal use of guns, several hundred accidental criminal or suicidal use of guns, several hundred accidental deaths by firearms are reported annually. Children to age 19 are particularly vulnerable, with about 500 deaths in that age group.

It is an historic concern of the National Safety Council to “prevent firearms from falling into the hands of the immature, untrained, or irresponsible person” (1967 policy statement).

The National Safety Council again calls attention to the lack of meaningful data relating to non-fatal firearms accidents. As it did in 1967, the Council strongly recommends that government, at all levels, together with interested groups and individuals, develop a uniform procedure for identifying, reporting and summarizing all types of firearms accidents. This will enable evaluation of accident-prevention programs and analysis of accident trends.

The Council urges the firearms industry to design safety features on weapons they produce so that children and untrained persons cannot readily fire them.

Finally, the National Safety Council continues to believe “that every person owning a gun of any sort must accept responsibility for the safekeeping and proper use of the firearm” (1967 policy statement). For the safety of children, the Council supports both practices and legislation that would protect children from unsupervised access to guns. Requirements for secure storage and safety devices on guns are examples of such strategies. Research is needed to explore all the strategies, including education and training programs, that will further the goal of preventing accidents and casualties from firearms.

This position statement reflects the opinions of the National Safety Council but not necessarily those of each member organization.

Submitted by the Community Service Division
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