

RESOURCES FROM THE FIREARM LIFE PLAN PROJECT

*Everything you'll
need to make a plan
for your firearms
that's right for you
and those you trust.*





INTRODUCTION

Responsibility and safety. Training and preparation. Protecting family and community. No matter the reason people have firearms, these ideals are shared by many responsible gun owners.

And responsible ownership means planning for the future – even things we hope don’t happen. If you could no longer operate your firearms safely, what would you want to happen to them? Responsible ownership also means making decisions about what will happen after your death.

The Firearm Life Plan was developed to help firearm owners think about these important questions and protect those they

trust from the burden of making difficult decisions without their guidance. A Firearm Life Plan is a voluntary, personal plan made between you and those you trust. You fill the documents out yourself and share them only with those you choose.

You can’t plan for everything life throws at you – but you can plan how you’ll respond. And again – the Firearm Life Plan documents are for you and only those you want to share them with. We don’t save any of your information.

A Firearm Life Plan will help you – and those you trust – be prepared. Find out more at: www.firearmlifeplan.org

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The Firearm Life Plan was developed through interviews with firearm owners and family members across the US. The work was led by a team of health researchers at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, with project funding from the National Institute on Aging.

WARNING SIGNS AND ASSESSMENTS

Being a responsible firearm owner means planning for the future—even for things we hope don’t happen. Physical and mental changes, or changes in life circumstances can require us to face important decisions, for example, regarding storage and use.



Being aware of warning signs in yourself and others is an important first step.

Firearm range safety officers, firearm instructors, healthcare professionals, other professionals who support older adults, and older adult firearm owners have all suggested these common concerns. If you or others have noticed any of these signs, it may be time to think about making changes to how you use or store firearms. It’s also a good idea to talk to your healthcare provider, since some of these changes might be treatable.

Have you or others noticed...

<p>PHYSICAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges holding, carrying, loading/unloading, shooting, or cleaning your firearm? • Decreased reaction time, aim, or performance (accuracy) in shooting? • Vision or hearing loss? Challenges seeing, reading, or hearing instructions?
<p>COGNITIVE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trouble remembering if the safety on your firearm has been engaged, or if a firearm is loaded or not? • Times when you’ve forgotten where your firearms are kept or stored? • Trouble remembering names?
<p>BEHAVIORAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxed or changed practices for safe firearm use and storage? • Times when you were told that you weren’t safely handling or storing a firearm? • Times when a trusted friend, family member, or shooting friend ever expressed fear or discomfort when you are shooting?
<p>EMOTIONAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mood changes like being more short-tempered, anxious, agitated, or angry? • Or the opposite—changes like being more depressed, helpless, or down? • Feelings like being more disconnected from family, friends, or activities you typically enjoy or used to enjoy over time?



MAKING SENSE OF THE WARNING SIGNS:

If you're unsure about your skills, practices, or firearm handling ability, consider getting input from someone with experience in safe firearm use—invite them to join you on a trip to a shooting range to provide feedback on how you're handling and operating the firearm.

You can also ask a range safety officer to evaluate your practices. These employees are responsible for ensuring safety on a firing range, and they have the skills and experience to give you an honest assessment.

Have you noticed any of these signs yourself, or has someone else remarked on them? Or has someone expressed some concerns about your firearm use? Being honest with yourself about your abilities and your responsibilities is a key step in this process.

Depending on what you or others think, see, or say, it might be time to think about making changes in how you use and store firearms.

These conversations can be difficult. In the next section, we provide a couple of conversation starters to consider. These discussion points and suggestions can help you start talking about a plan for your firearms.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

You may be worried about someone, or you may want to talk to people you trust about your firearms, but are not sure how to get started. Here are some ways to help begin talking about creating a Firearm Life Plan.

FOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF FIREARM OWNERS:

- I know we've never talked about it, but what do you want to do with your firearms as you get older?
- Hey, I've noticed that you really don't use your firearms much anymore – why is that?
- I've noticed [shaky hands, difficulty seeing] are giving you trouble lately. Next time you go to the shooting range, can I go with you? I'd like to see how you're shooting these days.
- I care about you, which is why I wanted to talk to you about your firearms. I've noticed some changes over the years that I was hoping to talk to you about.
- Do you think it's time to have someone give you an honest assessment about how you're handling your firearms these days?
- I know that a lot of things have changed over the years. I think it might be a good time for us to talk about how things are going with your firearms.
- You've always protected us, which is why I wanted to talk to you about your firearms.
- You always taught me about firearm safety. That's why I wanted to talk about some changes I've noticed lately.
- It's hard to think about anything ever happening to me or you, but making a plan just to be safe is always a good idea.

FIREARM OWNER:

- I think it's good to consider what happens to my belongings in the case of an emergency or if something happens to me. That includes my firearms, so let's have a talk.
- I understand that as I get older, some things change. It might be a good idea to have a plan in place for what might happen to my firearms.
- Firearms have always been a big part of my life, and I'd like to see to it that legacy is continued. Having a plan for what might happen to them if I'm unable to use them is a part of that legacy.
- If I'm ever incapacitated or die, I need to make sure that my firearms are taken proper care of. Having a conversation about what to do is important to me.



FIREARM LIFE PLAN

A complete Firearm Life Plan consists of:

- An inventory listing out all your firearms, where they are, where they're going and to whom.
- Identifying the person you trust to ensure that your wishes are fulfilled when it comes to enacting your Firearm Life Plan.

PART ONE – FIREARM INVENTORY

Compiling a list of your firearms may make future changes easier. Helpful details include their locations and what you want done with each firearm. You can also include their estimated value and any other information you think is important.

- A. Firearm details:** List all firearms in your possession with details like the make, model, caliber, condition, and serial number. A bill of sale or repair may list many of these details.
- B. Where is it now?** This information is a useful record for you and for the people you trust, in case there's a time in the future when you aren't able to tell them.
- Be as specific as you can – is it located in a lockbox in the closet? Or the gun safe in the garage? Do you have any firearms stored outside of the home?
 - Note the combination, code or key location for any storage devices.
 - Store these details where you store other sensitive information, so only you and your designees can access them.
- C. Where will it go? And who gets it?** For each firearm, think about what you want to do with it now, but also what you want to happen in the future. This includes thinking about the person, organization, or group that you want to get each firearm. Be sure to check with each recipient to make sure they're okay with receiving a firearm (and be sure to check applicable laws regulating firearm transfers).

“SELL”: This means you would permanently sell the firearm to another individual, business, or organization. For example, this might be a private sale to a family member, consignment or sale through a local firearm retailer, or a sale to a retailer.

“DONATE/GIFT”: This means you would permanently donate or gift the firearm to another individual or institution. For example, this might be a donation to a museum, historical society, or shooting organization, or a gift to a family member or close friend.

“DISABLE/DESTROY”: Sometimes firearm owners have firearms they don't want to remain in circulation, or they worry might fall into the wrong hands. Law enforcement agencies or gunsmiths may be able to help with this.



- D. When?** Now note when you'd want these actions to happen. This might be after your death, or if you develop dementia or other physical or mental conditions that limit your ability to safely use a firearm. You can describe what this situation might be. This is not a legally binding document—rather, it is guidance for your trusted ones.

- E. Notes:** Write any comments or details you want. This could be about the condition or history of the firearm, specific circumstances about when or how you'd want the firearm to be transferred, or memories attached to that firearm.

You can change this plan over time, just as your life changes.

PART TWO – HAVE A CONVERSATION

You can use this inventory to begin having a discussion with someone you trust and feel comfortable having enact your Firearm Life Plan (FLP). This could be a spouse, family member, trusted friend, or caregiver. This person would determine when to enact your FLP based on your guidance. This could be if you ever experience physical or cognitive impairments that make it unsafe for you to use your firearms, upon your death, or any other time that you specify.

This inventory is meant to explain your wishes and facilitate a conversation between you and your loved ones about what's important to you. It can be revisited and revised. This is not a legal document. If you want to make this document legally binding, consult an attorney.

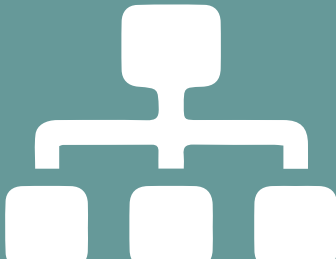
I, _____ (name) would like _____ (name) to follow the directions as outlined in my Firearm Inventory (see separate attachment).

A	B	C	D	E
Firearm Details	Where is it?	Where it will go? And who gets it?	When?	Notes
Example: Smith & Wesson 629, Good Condition, 123ABC456	Gun safe in my house Code: 21-56-96	<u>WHERE</u> : Gift to my son <u>WHO</u> : Pass down to son	Move into safety deposit box whenever my son tells me it's better off there (like if I develop dementia or physical disabilities)	This was given to me by my father, has sentimental value
Example: 2010 Ruger 10/22 rifle, good condition, 567EFG890	Gun safe in my house Code: 21-56-96	<u>WHERE</u> : Donate/gift to local youth firearm organization <u>WHO</u> : County Youth Shooting Sports	When I move into a retirement home	Good beginner's rifle, can help teach grandkids how to shoot
Example: Ear protection	Storage shed on my property Code: None	<u>WHERE</u> : Donate/gift to local youth firearm organization <u>WHO</u> : Douglas County Youth Shooting Sports	When I move into a retirement home, at end of 2021	Good pair of earmuffs, still functional
Example: Cobra Arms Freedom .38, poor condition, 567CAF890	Lockbox in bedroom closet Code: 0328	<u>WHERE</u> : Destroy it at local police department <u>WHO</u> : Douglas County Sheriff's Department	When I die or move to assisted living	Firearm was damaged. Was sold to me for cheap and should not be given or sold to anyone else.
Example: 1949 M1 Carbine, excellent condition	Gun safe in my house Key location: xxxx	<u>WHERE</u> : Transfer to traveling Korean War Exhibit <u>WHO</u> : Jeff Jackson, 719-555-5555	As soon as possible	Excellent condition and was willed to me by my uncle who served in Korea. Mr. Jackson manages a traveling Korean War exhibit and has expressed interest in the firearm in the past.

FIREARM INVENTORY

Your Firearm Inventory

A	B	C	D	E
Firearm Details	Where is it?	Where it will go? And who gets it?	When?	Notes



LEGACY MAP

Firearms can have personal, familial, historical, financial, and sentimental value for some people, while for others they are mainly a tool for specific purposes. Part of your Firearm Life Plan means thinking about what firearms mean to you—what legacy you want to leave, and what you want your loved ones to know.

This worksheet helps you record memories, meanings, and messages about your firearms.

Take your time, and then share it with those you care about. Use it as a way of expressing your legacy, lineage, or history with certain firearms. Invite others to share their thoughts, especially if you have memories with them. These questions are just examples to get you started.

- **Think about the firearms you own. Do you have memories or stories about any of them? What do you want others to know about them?**

- **Think about how you learned to shoot and handle a firearm safely. Who first taught you? Are there other firearm instructors or training that was important to you?**

- **How have firearms been important to you in your life? What did you use them for? Do you have any memorable experiences you want to share?**

- **What do you think is important for others to know about you as a responsible firearm owner?**



What is a Firearm Life Plan?

A Firearm Life Plan is a voluntary, personal guide for what a firearm owner wants to happen to their firearms if they are no longer able to use them safely, or upon death. It is a way to take responsibility and create an action plan to prepare for all situations. This plan is individualized and will look different for different people.

How do I know if I need a Firearm Life Plan?

Being prepared is an important aspect of responsible firearm ownership. All firearm owners should make a Firearm Life Plan to be prepared for whatever happens in the future.

Do older adults need to give up their firearms?

No. Age is not a determining factor in your ability to own and use firearms. Rather, it depends on an individual's physical and mental health, which can be impacted at any age and by the aging process. Being a responsible firearm owner means making tough calls, like reassessing your risks, understanding your needs, and making plans for the future – even for things we hope do not happen.

How does someone know it's time to consider making changes about how they use firearms?

Physical and mental changes, as well as changes in life circumstances, can affect safe firearm handling. See page 2 to read about some of the warning signs that may signal it is time to consider making changes about how you or a loved one may use or operate firearms.

What are some ways to begin the conversation about a Firearm Life Plan?

See page 5 for Conversation Starters.

What are options for what can be done with my firearms?

There are many options that may work for different people and may apply to different firearms based on their personal or financial value. Some options including selling, donating, or disabling firearms. See [HERE](#) for resources on what to do with firearms. Check applicable laws regulating firearm transfers and if uncertain, check with a firearm retailer.