

Guns and Domestic Violence – Fatal Consequences

In Pennsylvania and across our nation, guns are the most commonly used weapon in domestic violence homicides. Studies have shown that domestic violence victims whose abusers possess guns are in far greater danger than victims whose abusers do not have guns.

- **Recent research indicates that laws, which restrict firearm access for batterers subject to restraining orders are associated with an 11% reduction in rates of intimate partner homicide of women.** (Vigdor ER, Mercy JA. Disarming Batterers: The Impact of Domestic Violence Firearm Laws. In: Ludwig J, Cook PJ (eds.) Evaluating Gun Policy. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2003: 157-214.)
- Access to firearms increases the risk of intimate partner homicide nearly five times more than instances where there are no weapons. In addition, abusers who possess guns tend to inflict the most severe abuse on their partners. Campbell, Jacquelyn C. 2003. "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multisite Case Control Study." American Journal of Public Health.
- A 2002 study from Harvard School of Public Health found that while the United States accounted for 32 percent of the female population among 25 high-income countries, it accounted for 84 percent of the female firearm homicides. David Hemenway. Firearm Availability and Female Homicide Victimization Rates among 25 Populous High Income Countries. Journal of the American Medical Women's Association.
- Of females killed with a firearm, nearly two-thirds were killed by a current or former intimate partner. When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2001 Homicide Data: Females Murdered By Males in Single Victim/Single Offender Incidents. 2003.
- More than four times as many women are killed in gun violence inflicted by a current or intimate partner than those women killed by all other weapons used by strangers. When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2001 Homicide Data: Females Murdered By Males in Single Victim/Single Offender Incidents. 2003.
- Domestic violence misdemeanor convictions and restraining orders were the second most common reason for denials of handgun purchase applications. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. A National Estimate: Presale Handgun Checks, the Brady Interim Period, 1994-1998.
- The annual Domestic Violence Fatality Report produced by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence indicates that more than half of the domestic violence homicides in Pennsylvania were committed by perpetrators using firearms: 64.2% in 2004, 52.3% in 2005, 52.6% in 2006.
- A 2003 study by the American Journal of Public Health of women physically abused by current or former intimate partners revealed that women were at five times greater risk of being murdered by their partner when the partner owned a firearm.
- According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, family and intimate assaults involving firearms are 12 times more likely to result in death than intimate assaults that do not involve firearms.

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