

WHY WOULD ANYONE
HAVE A GUN?

GUN CONTROL



TO GET YOU THINKING...

Many people buy a gun with the belief it will help protect them. This is often a response to the high rate of violent crime in South Africa. But is it sensible? Will a gun make you more secure or will it put you and your loved ones in greater danger?

When it comes to crime, what we think is not often a reflection of reality. Many people believe South Africa is becoming more dangerous or that it is just as dangerous as it was 10 or 15 years ago. Yet, according to the South Africa Police Service (SAPS) serious crime has declined. Here are some numbers to consider:

Serious crime dropped from over 5,000 incidents per 100,000 people in 2003 to about 3,600 in 2011.

Homicides have declined from over 21,500 in 2000 to less than 17,000 in 2009.

Murder accounts for about 3% of deaths. However over the last four years there has been a steady increase in the murder rate: from a low of 15, 554 murders annually in 2011/12 to a new high of 18 673 murders in 2015/16 (the most recent crime stats from the SAPS). This is a 13 per cent increase over the four year period and translates into 57 murders a day in South Africa. There are still more murders than the number of road deaths. Despite the drop, South Africa remains a dangerous place.

Your risk of being murdered is vastly dependent on where you live. An affluent and mainly white suburb in Cape Town reported 37 murders from April 2003 to March 2012. In the same period, a mainly poor, black suburb reported nearly 2,300 murders - the highest of any place in the country. There is a strong link between living in a poor neighbourhood and the risk of being murdered.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How does having a gun make someone more secure?

How does a gun give somebody power?

Do you think owning a gun will keep somebody safe from violent criminals in your community?

Article: [So you want a gun?](#)

EXTRA RESOURCES ON THIS TOPIC

- > It is not easy to own a gun in SA**
- > Dispelling the myth of mental illness in gun crime**

DID YOU KNOW?



SMALL ARMS, COMMONLY KNOWN AS FIREARMS OR GUNS, ARE USED TO KILL AS MANY AS 1,000 PEOPLE EACH DAY GLOBALLY.

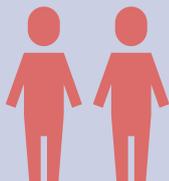
THERE ARE MORE THAN 875 MILLION GUNS IN THE WORLD, 75% OF THEM ARE IN THE HANDS OF CIVILIANS.



THERE ARE 253 MILLION MORE GUNS THAN PASSENGER VEHICLES IN THE WORLD.

Each year

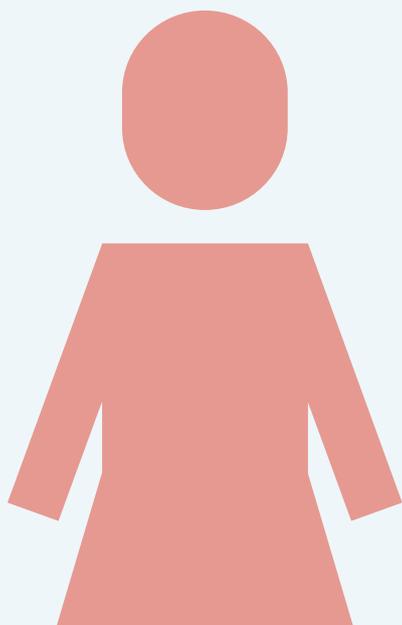
about eight million new guns, plus 10 to 15 billion rounds of ammunition are manufactured



ENOUGH BULLETS TO SHOOT EVERY PERSON - TWICE.

THE AUTHORISED INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN GUNS AND AMMUNITION MAKES A PROFIT OF OVER R77 BILLION EACH YEAR.

SOURCE: GunPolicy



In South Africa gun ownership is not a right but a privilege governed by law. The Firearms Control Act sets criteria for ownership.

WHAT IS THE FIREARMS CONTROL ACT (FCA)?

Adopted by Parliament in 2000, the Firearms Control Act (FCA) is the main law governing gun control in South Africa. The purpose of the FCA is:

- to establish a comprehensive and effective system of gun control and management; and
- to ensure the effective monitoring and enforcement of the law as it pertains to the control of guns

The FCA helps to:

- prohibit/restrict certain types of weapons and ammunition;
- prohibit/restrict certain uses of weapons and ammunition;
- prohibit/restrict certain users of weapons

SOURCE: SaferSpaces

EXTRA RESOURCES ON THIS TOPIC

Extra resources on this topic:

- > e-mail: firearms@saps.org.za
- > SAPS National Firearms Call Centre, (012) 353 6111
Firearms Control Act

THE FIREARMS CONTROL ACT ALLOWS GUN OWNERSHIP FOR THESE LICENCE CATEGORIES FOR CIVILIANS

Only people who have a competency certificate for a gun may apply for any of the following firearm licences:

- licence to own a firearm for self-defence (e.g. a semi-automatic gun)
- licence to own a restricted firearm for self-defence
- licence to own a firearm for occasional hunting and sports-shooting
- licence to own a firearm for dedicated hunting and dedicated sports-shooting
- licence to own a firearm as part of a private collection
- permit to own ammunition in a private collection
- licence to own a firearm for business purposes
- temporary authorisation to own a firearm

Summary Firearms Control Act

Remember in South African law, a gun is referred to as a firearm. When we speak to each other about firearms we use the term gun. In this guide we also use the term gun.



THE FIREARMS CONTROL ACT HAS EXEMPTIONS FOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS

Members of official state institutions, such as the South African Police Service or National Defence Force, do not have to follow many of the rules that apply to civilian firearm owners.

Even so, they have a duty to use their firearms in a controlled manner:

- when on duty, they must carry a handgun in a proper holster
- at the end of a period of duty, they must return their firearm (s) to the designated place of storage
- when traveling with a firearm, they must carry the firearm in a secure place

There are, however, certain circumstances when an employee of a state institution may have special permission to:

- have the firearm in their possession after working hours
- store the firearm at their home
- carry the firearm outside the premises of their work place

The above situations are not the norm, and require special permission

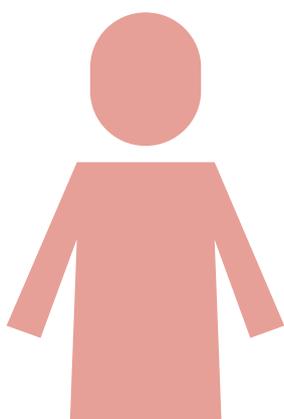
DISCUSSION

WHY DO PEOPLE HAVE GUNS IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

- Who are the gun owners or gun users in your community? Why do they own guns?
- Are legal gun owners the perpetrators of violence in your community? How do you know?
- Do you know how most people in your community get guns?
- Who is most likely to have a gun in your community:
 - Men or women?
 - The police or civilians?
- What are the ways that people experience gun violence in your community?
- Where do acts of gun violence take place?
- Who are the victims of gun violence in your community?
- What support systems are there for survivors of gun violence?
- Who in your community is working to create safer spaces?
- What are the ways to keep safe in places where there are guns?

Remember

**Be respectful of sharing sensitive and private information.
You can tell a story without giving personal details.**



“The bottom line for would-be gun owners is this: A firearm that is kept loaded and readily available in the home for protection may also be reached by a curious child, an angry spouse or a depressed grandparent.”

ARTHUR L. KELLERMANN

WHY WOULD ANYONE HAVE A GUN: MYTHS AND FACTS**MYTHS**

Teaching children about gun safety keeps them safe from gun violence

Illegal guns are the problem, not legal gun owners

Mental illness is a trigger for gun violence

Owning a gun in the home keeps your family safe from intruders

Guns don't kill - people do

A toy gun is not harmful - it's just a toy

FACTS

Children and guns are a deadly combination. While gun owners are required by law to store guns unloaded and safely locked away, most youngsters know their parents' hiding places, including where they hide safe keys. The presence of a gun increases the risk of gun violence. Not having any firearms at home with children is the safest alternative.

All illegal guns were once legal. Legal guns are also used to commit crime. Professions such as the police, military or private security industry provides easier access to guns and this is a risk factor for gun violence such as femicide. [Learn more about legal and illegal guns in crime.](#)

When we turn conversations about gun crime into conversations about mental health and mental illness we avoid the true issues underlying gun crime. Gun crime is a problem driven by a combination of situational, social and cultural factors. Situational factors refer to influences outside the individual, such as the environment and others around that person. Mental health is an individual factor and is rare as a trigger for gun violence.

SOURCE: Dispelling the Myth

For many South Africans having a gun in the home is about protecting themselves, their families and their possessions against an intruder. Research in South Africa shows that you are four times more likely to have your gun used against you than to be able to use it successfully in self-defence. Gun-related deaths are not random acts of chance. There is a simple cause and effect. The presence of a gun puts everyone at risk of injury and death.

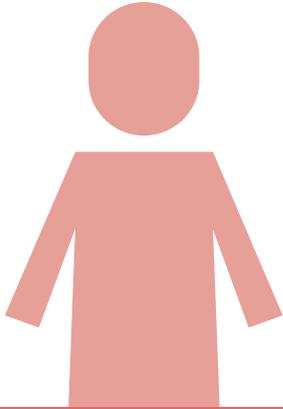
Evidence shows that limiting people's access to firearms - especially for young men between 15 and 29 years old - can prevent homicides, suicides and injuries. The data also shows that countries with 'restrictive' firearms law and lower firearm ownership levels tend to have lower levels of gun violence.

Other interventions that have shown some success in reducing gun deaths include: tougher laws, improving enforcement of laws, gun amnesties and collection schemes, managing state weapons stockpiles and reducing demand for guns.

Children receive conflicting messages when they're told to stay away from real guns because they are dangerous, yet are given toy replicas to play with.

Every toy we give our children carries the message that we approve of that toy. Children's play is a rehearsal for real life as they try out roles and practice being an adult by using tools that adults use.

SOURCE: Gun Free South Africa



“The death toll from small arms dwarfs that of all other weapons systems — and in most years greatly exceeds the toll of the atomic bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In terms of the carnage they cause, small arms, indeed, could well be described as ‘weapons of mass destruction’.”

KOFI ANNAN, UN SECRETARY-GENERAL,
MARCH 2000

DIFFERENT WAYS TO TALK ABOUT GUN CONTROL

These questions can help guide your radio shows and outreach.

They are angles to the bigger topic of gun control.

You have many examples of how to develop your outreaches and radio shows from previous guides. Use them to expand on some of the angles below.



Mental illness does not pull the trigger



Having a gun gives you power



What are the ways of keeping safe in a community where there are guns?



Dispelling the Myth: Guns don't kill people. People kill people.



Who has guns in my community and how do they use them?