



Evaluation of Project Safe Guard (PSG) Universal Training: Does PSG Training Change Secure Storage Behavior?



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BACKGROUND

- Firearm-related harm, including suicide, remains a significant concern among National Guard service members and their families (Walsh, 2025).
- Project Safe Guard (PSG) is an evidence-based lethal means safety program; a prior randomized controlled trial in the Mississippi National Guard demonstrated sustained secure storage at 6-month follow-up (Anestis, 2021).
- Subsequent adaptations expanded the focus of PSG to universally target the prevention of all forms of firearm injury and death (Walsh, 2024).
- As part of the National Guard’s Integrated Primary Prevention initiative, civilian trainers are implementing a 90-minute PSG Universal Training to build a self-sustaining infrastructure.
- This analysis evaluates short-term (1-month) descriptive changes in firearm storage behaviors following the implementation of the PSG Universal Training.

METHODS

- Twenty PSG Universal Trainings were conducted across various states with a total of 1,279 individuals attending the training.
- The training consisted of a 90-minute didactic presentation on the ways in which secure firearm storage can protect against various forms of injury and death, including suicide and unintentional shootings.
- Firearm locking boxes were distributed to participants.
- Evaluation consisted of a pre-training assessment of knowledge and attitudes, an immediate post-training survey measuring attitude change, and a 1-month follow-up tracking behavior retention.
- The majority of attendees (92.3%) completed the pre-training survey, with 71.8% of those completing the post-training survey, and 89.7% completing the 1-month follow-up to yield a final analytic sample size of 552 (*n* = 552).

Baseline Sample Demographics	%
Sex (Male)	71.7%
Racial Identity (White)	77.0%
Hispanic/Latino(a)	21.0%
Kids in Home	49.7%
Home Firearm Access	84.8%

RESULTS

- At baseline, 84.8% of the 1,279 total attendees reported household firearm access.
- Table 1 reports the percentage of attendees who, at baseline, believed various secure storage methods are very or extremely helpful at preventing suicide, unintentional shooting, and domestic violence.
- Table 2 depicts changes in secure storage behavior among those with home firearm access who completed the 1-month follow-up, along with reasons for change.

Table 1: Baseline Secure Storage Beliefs (% Very/Extremely Helpful)

Secure Storage Method	Suicide Prevention	Unintentional Shooting	Domestic Violence
Locked Location	73.0%	88.0%	70.6%
Locking Device	71.1%	85.8%	61.8%
Away From Home	70.3%	83.6%	-
Separate Ammo	64.6%	81.5%	63.5%
Store Unloaded	63.3%	79.4%	59.1%

Table 2: 1-Month Behavioral Shifts

	Locked Previously Unlocked Firearms	Unloaded Previously Loaded Firearms	Stored Firearms Away From Home That Had Been at Home
Total	51.6%	31.3%	10.0%
Reasons			
Prevent child/adolescent access	69.1%	66.5%	36.4%
Prevent Access by Other	53.7%	56.1%	38.2%
Lower Suicide Risk	31.2%	37.0%	16.4%
Lower Unintentional Injury/Death Risk	55.1%	63.0%	43.6%
Lower Theft Risk	42.1%	34.7%	20.0%
Lower Deadly Domestic Violence Risk	22.1%	28.3%	14.5%

CONCLUSION

- The 90-minute Project Safe Guard (PSG) Universal Training is highly acceptable to National Guard audiences and results in rapid, meaningful behavioral changes regarding secure firearm storage.
- Increased secure firearm storage behaviors are explicitly motivated by a purposeful desire to reduce unauthorized lethal access by children, adolescents, and other adults.
- Backed by a multi-year rollout across 20 training locations, PSG is strategically positioned to prompt broad culture change and shift peer perceptions of secure firearm storage in the military.
- This universal framework systemically increases receptivity to lethal means safety within ongoing Integrated Primary Prevention efforts across the National Guard.
- Future evaluation will assess if receiving a firearm locking box directly influences secure storage behavior.

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