



Guns and Domestic Violence Fact Sheet

Guns and domestic violence are a lethal combination. Gun violence and intimate partner violence (IPV) are deeply interconnected, with devastating impacts on not only individual victims, but also their families, communities, and the nation. Research has clearly shown that guns can turn IPV deadly. In fact, ***abusers with access to a gun are five times more likely to kill their female victims.***¹

In cases of interpersonal or domestic violence, women are at an even greater risk if a firearm is involved. Contrary to public perception, most women who are victims of murder are killed by men they know, *not by a stranger*.

- Of females killed with a firearm, almost two-thirds were killed by their intimate partners.²
- 1,686 women were murdered by men in 2015. That's more than four women every day. Nine out of 10 victims knew their offenders. Of these, 64% were the current partners or ex-wives of their killers.³

Important Statistics on Women and Domestic Violence involving a Firearm:

- More than half of women murdered with guns in the U.S. in 2011 were killed by intimate partners or family members.⁴
- In recent decades, more intimate partner homicides have been committed with guns than with all other weapons combined.⁵

¹ J.C.Campbell, D.W.Webster,J.Koziol-McLain, *et al.*, "Risk Factors for Femicide Within Physically Abusive Intimate Relationships", 93 American Journal of Public Health1089-

² *When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2015 Homicide Data* (2017) Violence Policy Center. Washington DC. p.3. Available here: <http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2017.pdf>

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⁴ U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Supplementary Homicide Report, 2011.

⁵ Fox, J.A., and M.W. Zawitz. 2009. Homicide trends in the United States: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

- In states that require background checks for all handgun sales, there are 38 percent fewer women shot to death by intimate partners.⁶
- U.S. federal laws prohibiting domestic abusers from buying or owning guns do not apply to dangerous people convicted of misdemeanor stalking offenses or to dating partners, even though more women in the U.S. are killed by their dating partners than by their spouses.⁷
- Nearly two-thirds (64.7%) of women in shelter who reported the presence of a gun in their household said that a gun was used by their partner as a tool to scare, threaten or harm.⁸

Women, Firearms and Self Defense

The gun industry has made attempts to increase sales by scaring women into owning guns for self-defense purposes. In actuality, statistics show that guns are more of a danger than a means of security.

- In 1992, for every time a woman used a handgun to justifiably kill a stranger, 239 women were murdered by a handgun.⁹
- A firearm in the home raises a woman's risk of suicide by a factor of five, while her risk of homicide is increased by more than three times.¹⁰

The evidence is clear: intimate partner violence combined with access to firearms is a deadly combination. Common-sense laws that keep guns out of the hands of abusive partners reduce gun violence and IPV.

⁶ U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 2011.

⁷ Alexia Cooper and Erica L. Smith, U.S. Department of Justice, Homicide Trends in the United States, 1980-2008, Nov. 2011.

⁸ Susan B. Sorenson and Douglas J. Wiebe, Weapons in the Lives of Battered Women, Aug. 2004, University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons.

⁹ Kellerman, Arthur L. and James A Mercy, "Men Women, and Murder: Gender-specific differences in Rates of Fatal Violence and Vicitmization," The Journal of Trauma, Vol. 33, no. 1, July 1992

¹⁰ Kellerman, Arthur L. and James A Mercy, "Men Women, and Murder: Gender-specific differences in Rates of Fatal Violence and Vicitmization," The Journal of Trauma, Vol. 33, no. 1, July 1992