



Firearm Restraining Order Toolkit

for Illinois Pediatric Health
Care Clinicians



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How to Talk to Families About Limiting Firearm Access from Individuals Who Are a Potential Danger to Themselves or Others

The Purpose of This Toolkit

Firearms are the leading cause of death in children in Illinois. If a person uses a firearm to attempt suicide, the fatality rate is more than 90%, making firearms the most lethal method to use during a suicide attempt. Additionally, in intimate partner violence, the presence of a firearm dramatically increases the risk of harm or death for a woman in that situation. One tool that Illinois families can access to restrict an individual's access to firearms is a Firearm Restraining Order.



Gun-related intimate partner violence is a lethal crisis facing women in the United States



90%+ Suicide fatality rate by firearm



Firearms are the leading cause of death in children in Illinois



Abusers with firearms are five times more likely to kill their female victims

The Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) developed this toolkit to help clinicians and other pediatric health care providers to better understand FRO legislation and to identify actionable ways to leverage FRO to protect patients in their care.



<https://everytownresearch.org/report/guns-and-violence-against-women/>



About the Firearm Restraining Order (FRO)

Many states across the country have Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) laws that outline ways for family, household members, or law enforcement to ask a court to restrict a person's access to guns, ammunition, and firearm parts when that person poses a significant danger to themselves or others.



Illinois has enacted a state-specific effort known as The Firearm Restraining Order, designed to assist families and law enforcement in preventing gun violence and firearm-related suicide.

What Does a Firearm Restraining Order Do?

A Firearm Restraining Order is a court order used to temporarily remove firearms from someone who is considered to be a potential danger to themselves or others. If issued, the respondent cannot legally possess or purchase firearms, ammunition, and firearm parts. The individual's Firearm Owners Identification (FOID) card or Conceal and Carry (CCL) License are also suspended for that duration of time.



Understanding Your Role as a Clinician or Pediatric Health Care Provider

Building Firearm Violence Prevention and FRO Guidance Into Your Clinical Workflow

While health care providers are not able to petition for a FRO, you can and may play a crucial role in advising and supporting patients and their families on using and obtaining FROs and their protections.

Health care providers *cannot*:

- Petition for a FRO.

Health care providers *can*:

- Work with the petitioner to support them through the process, including helping to complete the necessary form.
- If the petitioner is using a lawyer, you can volunteer to speak with the lawyer in support of the case.
- To assist with the petitioning process, you can refer the family to a social worker or case manager who can provide ongoing support as they work through the steps of requesting a FRO.

Additional Firearm Safety Support & Resources

When a firearm is present in the home, even when there is no imminent risk, educating patients and families about safe storage is critical. Use the resources developed by ICAAP and subject matter experts to help build your patients' understanding of firearm safety and risk.

[View Resources](#)

Shareable Firearm Safety & Storage Resources for Patients

As trusted advocates for children's health and well-being, pediatric clinicians play a vital role in preventing unintentional injuries and promoting safe environments. Firearms are now the leading cause of death among children in the United States—a sobering reality that demands proactive engagement from the healthcare community.

Download, print, and share the following resources to improve your patients' at-home gun storage and safety practices:



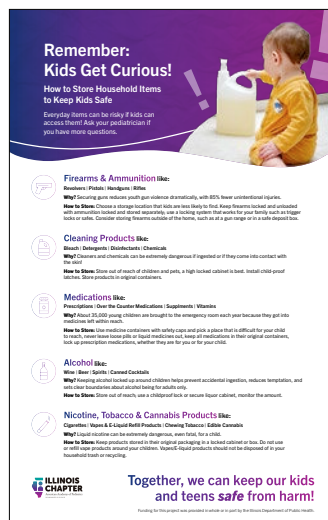
Firearm Storage & Safety Tips Flyer

— this quick-read, single-sided flyer provides simple, clear, and effective guidance for families on how to safely store firearms and reduce risks in the home. Share with families at every well-child visit!



Firearm Safety Social Media Campaign

provides ready-to-use social media graphics and copy to help you reach families with lifesaving information about safe firearm storage and child injury prevention. These posts offer concise, approachable messaging that highlights key safety practices, such as locking firearms and ammunition separately, asking about firearm access in other homes, and normalizing these conversations as part of everyday parenting—just like car seat use or helmet safety.



How to Store Household Items to Keep Kids Safe Poster

offers a concise, family-friendly overview of everyday items that pose serious risks to children, including medications, cleaning supplies, alcohol, firearms, and nicotine or cannabis products. Display this poster in exam rooms, waiting areas, or distribute it as a take-home resource to reinforce safe habits.

Shareable Guidance on Obtaining a FRO

Who Can Petition for a FRO?

Family members, household members, or law enforcement can petition an Illinois circuit court for an order to temporarily limit firearm access for an individual who poses a danger of injury (respondent).



Family Members



Household Members



Law Enforcement

Who is Considered a Family Member?

“Family member of the respondent” can be a:

- Spouse
- Former spouse
- Person with whom the respondent has a minor child in common
- Parent
- Child of the respondent
- Stepchild of the respondent
- Any other person related by blood or present marriage to the respondent
- Person who shares a common dwelling with the respondent

In What Counties Can You File a Petition for a FRO?

A petition for a FRO may be filed:

- In the county where the respondent resides
- In any county where:
 - An incident occurred that involved the respondent posing an immediate and present danger of causing personal injury to the respondent or another by having in their custody or control a firearm, ammunition, or firearm parts that could be assembled to make an operable firearm.
 - An incident occurred in which the respondent purchased, possessed, or received a firearm, ammunition, or firearm parts that could be assembled to create an operable firearm threat.

Shareable Guidance - Continued

Where Do You File a FRO Petition?

To begin the process of petitioning for a FRO, family members can either contact the County Clerk's Office or their local law enforcement agency.

County Clerk's Office

- Find your local County Clerk's Office here and share with your patients if danger or threat is perceived.
- The Clerk's Office will provide your patient the forms they need to complete and can direct families to the appropriate person to assist with completing a FRO petition.
- While Clerks are not able to help write the petition, they can refer to organizations in the community that can provide assistance.

Local Law Enforcement Agency

- Advise patients that they can and should report all immediate safety threats to local law enforcement.
- If the law enforcement agency chooses not to petition for a FRO or the family prefers not to approach law enforcement, they can still petition for a FRO with the County Clerk's Office.

What Types of Firearm Restraining Orders are Available to Patients in Illinois?

Emergency Firearm Restraining Order (EFRO) – An immediate court order issued in urgent situations to quickly neutralize the threat of an individual causing serious and immediate harm. Petitioners must present evidence to a judge showcasing the imminent risk in order to obtain an EFRO. This can include threats of violence, recent acts of violence, dangerous behavior, or mental health issues. An EFRO is temporary and can last for up to 14 days.

Plenary Firearm Restraining Order (FRO) – A longer-term court order that typically follows an Emergency Firearms Restraining Order (EFRO) that can last up to 6 months. The Plenary FRO is designed to provide ongoing protection when there is sufficient evidence that the person continues to pose a serious threat of violence or harm. The judge will decide whether to grant the order based on the evidence and testimony presented during the hearing. The purpose of the Plenary FRO is to ensure public safety by preventing potentially dangerous individuals from accessing firearms over a longer period of time.

Plenary Firearm Restraining Order Extension (FRO Extension) – If the petitioner believes the threat to safety remains, they can file a written request for an extension of a FRO during the last 3 months before the order expires. The court will hold another full hearing where the petitioner must again prove by "clear and convincing evidence" that the respondent continues to pose a danger.

Motion to Terminate Firearms Restraining Order – A legal request filed by the respondent or the petitioner to end the restraining order before its expiration. The motion must be filed with the same court that issued the FRO and should include reasons why the FRO should be terminated, such as improved behavior or resolved issues. After filing, a court hearing will be scheduled where both parties may present evidence and testimony regarding whether the FRO should be lifted.

Are There Expedited or Emergency Petition Processes Available to Families?

Illinois does offer emergency and six-month FRO processes including:

Emergency FRO

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| 1 A petitioner files for an emergency FRO when the respondent is believed to pose an immediate threat of harm to self or others. | 2 The emergency FRO is reviewed in an ex parte hearing as soon as possible. | 3 If an emergency FRO is issued, a search warrant is granted for law enforcement to recover any firearms. | 4 Law enforcement removes any firearms and the respondent's FOID card. |
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Six-Month FRO

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| 1 A full hearing is held where the respondent has the opportunity to be present and state their case. | 2 If an emergency FRO was previously granted, the full hearing must take place within 14 days of issuance. | 3 The petitioner must provide "clear and convincing" evidence that the respondent accessing firearms presents a danger to themselves or others. | 4a If a FRO is not issued, the respondent immediately has their firearms and FOID card returned. |
| | | | 4b If a FRO is issued, law enforcement removes any firearms and the respondent's FOID card. |

Termination

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| 1 The respondent may request one termination hearing while the FRO is in effect. | 2a Termination is granted | 3a The respondent will have their firearms and FOID card returned. |
| | 2b Termination is not granted | 3b Law enforcement retains the respondent's firearms and FOID card. |

Renewal

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| 1 The petitioner may request a renewal during the last 3 months the order is in effect. | 2a Renewal is granted | 3a Law enforcement retains the respondent's firearms and FOID card. |
| | 2b Renewal is not granted | 3b The respondent will have their firearms and FOID card returned. |

Additional FRO Resources for Clinicians

While clinicians cannot file for a FRO on behalf of a patient, they should actively work to educate at-risk patients and families whenever possible. Use the resources below to help drive awareness for the Firearm Restraining Order in Illinois:



Firearm Restraining Order (FRO) Poster

offers vital information about a legal tool designed to temporarily remove firearms from individuals who may pose a danger to themselves or others. It explains what a FRO is, who can request one, when it might be appropriate to consider, and how the process works in Illinois.

This piece is ideal for placement in private, quiet spaces such as bathrooms, individual exam rooms, or other confidential areas where patients and caregivers can view it without feeling exposed. Its straightforward language and clear call-to-action, paired with a QR code for more information, making it an effective way to empower individuals who may be in a vulnerable or uncertain situation.

By offering this information discreetly, providers create a safe pathway for patients or family members to initiate a conversation during their visit. It's a small act with potentially life-saving consequences.



FRO Quick Facts Guide

gives pediatric and other healthcare providers essential information they may need during appointments when firearm access and safety concerns arise. It offers a concise overview of what a Firearm Restraining Order (FRO) is, who can petition for one, and how providers can support families through the process.

While clinicians cannot file a FRO for a patient directly, this guide outlines how you can assist, whether by offering informed guidance, connecting families with support staff, or reinforcing safe storage practices. Keep this resource handy in your clinical area or digital toolkit to help integrate firearm violence prevention into everyday care conversations.

Shareable Guidance When Families Do Not Obtain a FRO

How to Help Families That Can't Get a FRO

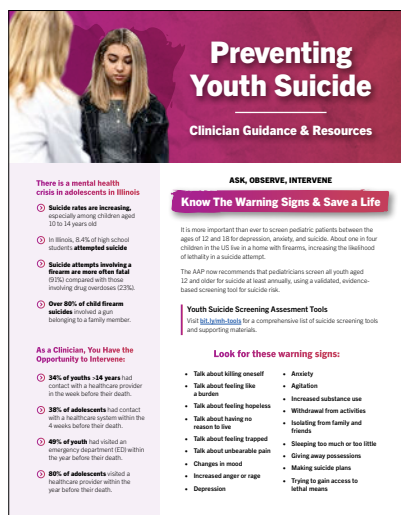
Pediatricians should provide anticipatory guidance to all families about firearm safety. This becomes especially important for families who may need a FRO but are unable to access one. In these circumstances, guidance should focus on the importance of providing barriers to accessing firearms.

Guidance & Resources for Safe Storage

During times of imminent risk, especially when a child or family member may be experiencing a mental health crisis or suicidal thoughts, educating families about safe firearm storage becomes critically important. Access to a firearm during these vulnerable moments significantly increases both the likelihood of a suicide attempt and the lethality of that attempt. Firearms are the most lethal means of suicide, and reducing access can be a life-saving intervention.

Even temporary changes in storage during high-risk periods can help prevent tragedy and protect the entire household. Providers can use the resources in this toolkit to build their capacity to address firearm storage and safety concerns confidently and effectively in clinical practice.

Use the following ICAAP resources to provide anticipatory guidance for safe firearm storage: [\[Link\]](#)



Clinician Guidance & Resources Fact Sheet

offers key data, screening recommendations, and actionable tips to help pediatric providers identify and reduce suicide risk among youth, especially in homes with firearms. With up to 80% of adolescents having seen a healthcare provider in the year prior to suicide, providers are uniquely positioned to intervene. This resource highlights warning signs, evidence-based screening tools, and safe firearm storage guidance for families. Keep this fact sheet accessible in your clinical space to support timely conversations and strengthen your role in protecting young lives.



Firearm Safety and Youth Suicide Prevention Poster

is designed to spark awareness and encourage action among families and caregivers. With clear, compassionate messaging and simple safe gun storage tips, it highlights the critical link between firearm access and youth suicide risk. Providers are encouraged to display this poster in high-traffic areas such as waiting rooms, clinic hallways, or near check-in desks, anywhere it can catch a parent's or caregiver's eye. A visible reminder like this can open the door to life-saving conversations and reinforce your clinic's commitment to child safety and mental health.



Firearm Safety & Suicide Social Media Campaign

provides pediatric providers and clinics with ready-to-use graphics and post copy focused on youth suicide prevention and firearm safety. Each post is designed to raise awareness, educate families, and encourage conversations around mental health and safe firearm storage. Providers are encouraged to share these posts on their personal or practice social platforms to amplify the message and reach families online. This content is impactful, easy to use, and a powerful way to extend your voice beyond the clinic walls.

Guidance & Resources for Temporary Firearm Transfers

Patients and clinicians can work together to decide on appropriate options for storage outside the home during times of elevated risk. By counseling patients and families about options for temporary, voluntary transfers of guns, you can help put time and space between the person at risk and lethal means.



Additional Firearm Safety Resources for Clinicians & Pediatricians

Share Key Information with Your Patients to Limit Firearm Risk

Illinois State Resources

Illinois Department of Public Health

Firearm Restraining Orders

- A comprehensive list of state resources and organizations that engage with FRO civil court orders.

Injury & Violence Prevention

- Key information on injury as a preventable “disease” and the Public Health Model.

Pause to Heal Campaign

- Those in crisis need time to think things over, to seek help, and to get better. The Pause to Heal Campaign empowers individuals and families to take a moment of pause and to consider the role of firearms in their home.

Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts – Firearm Restraining Order Forms

- A comprehensive list of form and clerical assistance for petitioning for a FRO.

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority – Firearm Restraining Orders in Illinois

- A description of FROs in Illinois.

Illinois Legal Aid Online – Firearm Restraining Orders

- Easy-to-read resources for individuals and families about the Firearm Restraining Order in Illinois.

Office of the Illinois Attorney General

Safer Communities

- Resources for law enforcement regarding the safety of children and families in Illinois.

Firearms Restraining Order Fact Sheet

- A comprehensive description of FRO as provided to law enforcement.

Regional/National Resources

Ad Council Research Institute Extreme Risk Protection Order Study

- A research study outlining the knowledge of and attitudes toward ERPOs by the general public and identify the most effective way(s) to discuss these laws.

The Joyce Foundation

- Information on gun violence prevention and justice reform.

Brady – What Are Extreme Risk Laws?

- Detailed information on Extreme Risk Protection Orders that can help prevent a person in crisis from harming themselves or others.

Johns Hopkins – National Extreme Risk Protection Order Resource Center

- Resources and guidance on ERPOs and how they are implemented.

Resources for Health Care Providers

American Academy of Pediatrics – Gun Safety and Injury Prevention

- AAP resources and guidance for gun safety and injury prevention in a medical care setting.

AAP Gun Safety Toolkit

- Easy-to-use digital graphics and messaging to share with patients regarding gun safety.

AAP Recommendations

Firearm-Related Injuries and Deaths in Children and Youth Policy Statement

- Official statement and information on anticipatory guidance, lethal means counseling, violence prevention programs, legislation, and more.

Firearm-Related Injuries and Deaths in Children and Youth Technical Report

- Official statement and information on suicide, homicide, unintentional death, and nonfatal firearm injuries.

Role of the Pediatrician in Youth Violence Prevention

- Official statement and information on connecting with children, addressing bullying, dating violence, and the role of the pediatrician.

Suicide and Suicide Attempts in Adolescents

- Official statement and information on increased risk for adolescents, bullying, internet use, and ways to interview and manage adolescents presenting with concerns.

Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention

- Information and resources to support clinicians in addressing youth suicide.

Resources for Advancing Mental Health in Pediatrics – Firearm Safety

- Key information on firearm laws, ways to navigate firearm conversations, and how to store and dispose of guns safely.

Safe Storage Resources for Families

Be SMART – Secure Gun Storage

- Sharable resources written for individuals and families on how to properly store guns.

End Family Fire

- Additional information on gun safety and storage and how to prevent the misuse of unsecured firearms in the home.

Project ChildSafe

- A nationwide, comprehensive firearm safety and education program created by gun owners for gun owners.

FRO Legislation Details

Learn more about FRO in Illinois by accessing the full Public Act documents

Illinois

Public Act 100-0607

Firearms Restraining Order Act

Public Act 102-0345

Firearms Restraining Order
Awareness Act

Public Act 102-1116

Protect Illinois Communities Act

Federal

Public Law 117-159

Bipartisan Safer Communities Act

Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Proposal Summary

