

California Firearm Retailers: *Your vigilance could save a life!*

Close to one in ten firearm suicides in California occur with guns purchased within that same week, usually within hours. While not all suicides are preventable, you could reduce the odds that a gun bought at your store today is used in a suicide tomorrow.

Signs that a potential buyer could be suicidal

Note: None of these signs clearly indicate someone is suicidal, but if any are present (especially if more than one is present), use extra caution in deciding whether to proceed with the sale.

- No knowledge about guns AND no interest in learning; asks no questions
- Doesn't care which gun s/he purchases or seem responsive to your questions about the purchase
- Gives unconvincing response when asked what s/he intends to use the gun for
- No interest in firearm maintenance or safety
- Mentions recent crisis, such as a divorce, job loss, or other setback
- Makes comments that could suggest suicidality (e.g. "I don't need a lot of ammunition, I won't have the gun for long.")
- Looks anxious, avoids eye contact
- Appears distraught (shaking, fighting back tears)

Options for responding to a potentially suicidal buyer

- Notify store owner or manager (if applicable) if at all uncomfortable with a prospective sale
- Urge customer with little firearm experience to seek training before buying
- Ask the customer why s/he wants a firearm and how and where s/he plans to use it
- Suggest the customer take some more time to think it over before buying
- If s/he claims to be buying for self-defense, offer to sell pepper spray instead
- Ask person directly if s/he is suicidal; if yes, offer National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number (1-800-273-TALK [8255])
- Notify nearby dealers that someone you denied a sale to may go to their store; notify police
- Trust your instincts; you are under no obligation to sell a gun to anyone

"What else can I do?"

- Display a suicide prevention hotline poster in your store
- Distribute firearm safety brochures to buyers that include information about recognizing suicide warning signs and keeping firearms away from suicidal or depressed family members

The information in this document was originally developed by the New Hampshire Firearm Safety Coalition as part of an effort to bring together a broad range of individuals and organizations around the common goal of suicide prevention. For more information about the Coalition and its work, visit www.nhfsc.org