

Firearm Retailers Role in Preventing Firearm Injuries and Deaths

Did you know? The leading cause of firearm deaths in Springfield, Missouri, is suicide. In 2020, 62% of firearm deaths in Springfield were suicides, and from 2015-2020, the highest risk for suicide were males approximately 40 years of age.

Identifying Warning Signs



- Customer does not know firearms and has no interest in learning more
- Unresponsive to questions about what type of firearm they would like
- Unconvincing about past firearm training
- Mentions a recent crisis
- States that they will not need extra ammunition
- Appears anxious and avoids any eye contact with you
- Appears to be under the influence of substances
- Seems to be in distress
- Exhibiting signs of psychosis (i.e., trouble concentrating, delusions, hallucinations)

Options for Response



- Notify a supervisor immediately if you are uncomfortable with a sale
- Urge customers to engage in firearm training before purchase
- Inquire why the customer would like a firearm
- Suggest the customer takes more time to consider a firearm purchase
- If they say they want a firearm for self-defense, suggest pepper spray instead
- Ask the customer directly if they are suicidal; if yes, provide them with the phone number to the Burrell Center Crisis Line (1-800-494-7355)

In one state study, firearm retailers worked with public health professionals on a suicide prevention program by displaying suicide prevention posters, distributing brochures, and learning how to ask customers questions about their purchase after they exhibit warning signs. This successful initiative led 87% of firearm retailers in this state to regularly use tips to avoid selling a firearm to customers showing warning signs for suicide.