

Firearm Injury and Death in North Carolina, 2023

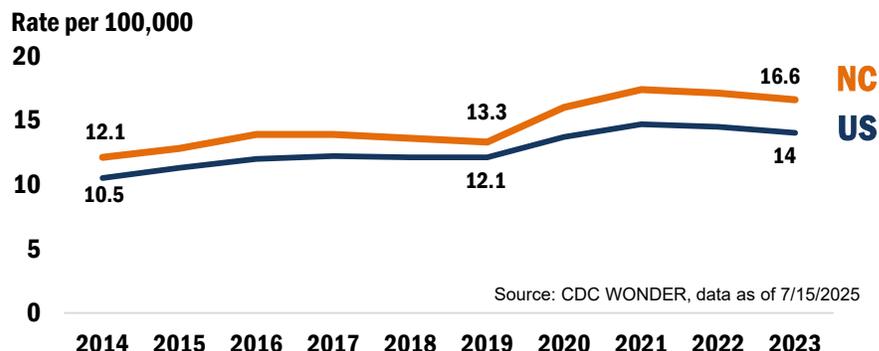
Note: some data are provisional and subject to change

5 people a day die from firearm injury in NC

There were **1,767 firearm-related deaths** among North Carolina (NC) residents in 2023.

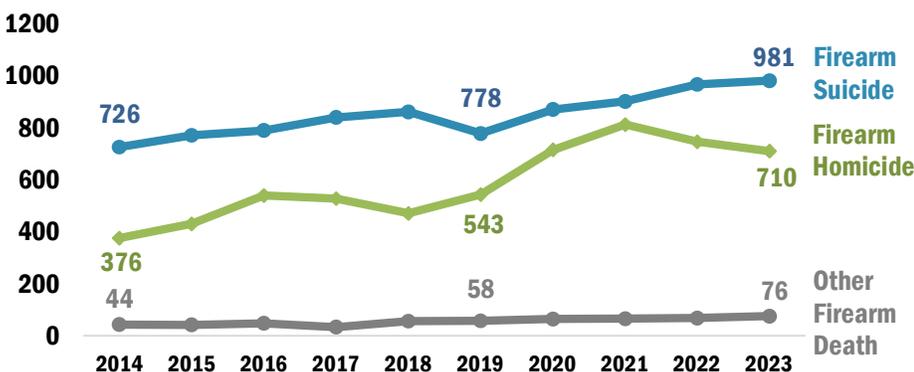
The number of firearm deaths in NC has increased by 54% over the past 10 years, **with a 28% increase since 2019** (1,379 deaths in 2019 to 1,767 deaths in 2023).

The rate of firearm injury death is higher in NC than across the US. NC has experienced an increase in firearm deaths since 2019.



More than half (56%) of NC firearm deaths in 2023 were suicides, and 40% of were homicides.

Number of Firearm Deaths by Manner, NC-VDRS, 2014-23; Death Certificate Data, 2024*



Limited to NC residents
Source: NC Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS), 2014-2023

If you or someone you know needs support call or text **988** or chat **988lifeline.org**

Firearm suicides have increased by 35% over the past 10 years to just over 980 deaths in 2023.

Firearm homicides increased by 89% over the past 10 years, but have decreased from 2021 by 13%.

Other firearm death includes unintentional firearm deaths (1.6% in 2023), legal intervention (1.9%), and other firearm deaths of undetermined intent (<1%).

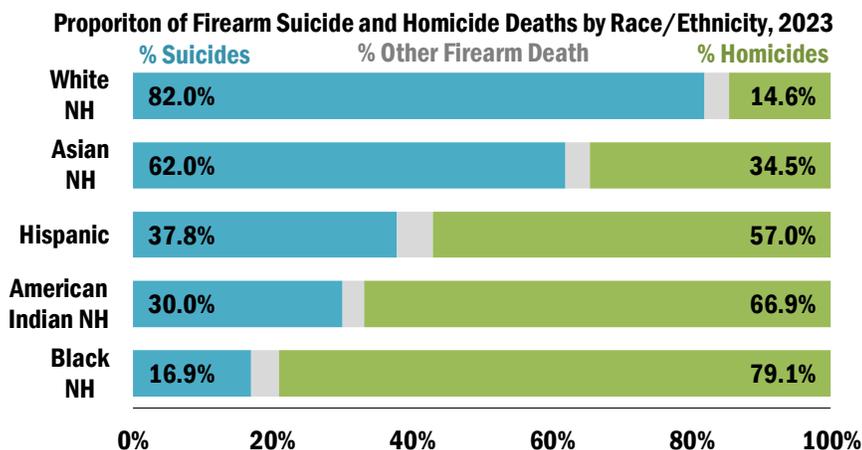
The rate of firearm death was 6 times higher for males than females (28.4 and 4.7 per 100,000, respectively).

Rates of firearm death were highest among males ages 18-24 (49.1 per 100,000) and 25-34 (40.7 per 100,000).

By race/ethnicity, rates of firearm-related death were highest among non-Hispanic (NH) American Indian males and NH Black males, followed by NH white males (70.7, 50.5, and 25.0 per 100,000, respectively).

The manner of firearm-related death differs by race/ethnicity.

Most firearm deaths among NH Black, NH American Indian, and Hispanic residents were **homicides**, whereas most firearm-related deaths among NH Asian and NH white residents were **suicides**.



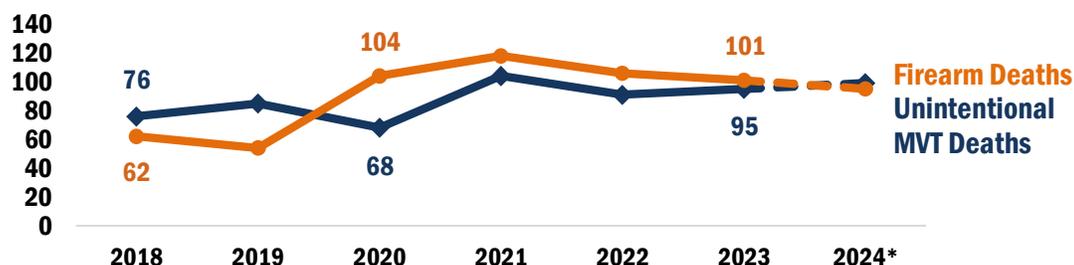
Limited to NC residents; suicides limited to residents ages 10 and older.
Source: NC-VDRS, 2023

Firearm deaths are a health equity issue

Generations of social, economic, and environmental inequities contribute to disparities in injuries, including from firearms. When interpreting data, it is crucial to recognize and acknowledge these systemic, avoidable, and/or unjust factors.

Child firearm deaths surpassed the number of child deaths from motor vehicle traffic (MVT) crashes for the first time in NC in 2020 and remain a leading cause of child injury death.

Number of Child Deaths



More than 100 children ages 0-17 died from a firearm injury in NC in 2023. Child firearm injury deaths increased 63% from 2018 to 2023.

* 2024 Death Certificate (DC) data are provisional and subject to change, data as of 7/9/2025; Limited to NC residents ages 0-17
Source: NC-VDRS, 2016-2023; NC State Center for Health Statistics, DC Data, 2024*

Firearm deaths are preventable

Storing firearms safely, locked and unloaded, can greatly reduce the risk of firearm-related injury and death.



1/3 of youth suicides and unintentional deaths are prevented by securing firearms.

Monuteaux, Azrael, Miller, JAMA Pediatr. 2019

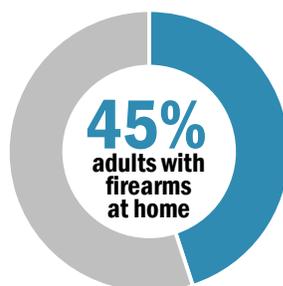


Storing ammunition in a locked location separate from firearms can reduce the risk of firearm injury, especially in households with children.

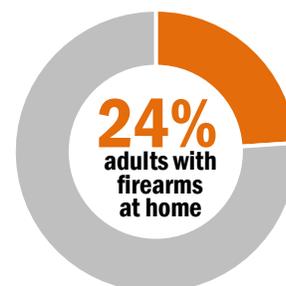
More than 1.5 Million (42%) of NC adults have a firearm in or around the home.

Nearly half of adults store their firearm(s) **loaded** and 1 in 4 adults store their firearm(s) **both loaded and unloaded**.

Firearms Stored Loaded



Firearms Stored Loaded & Unloaded



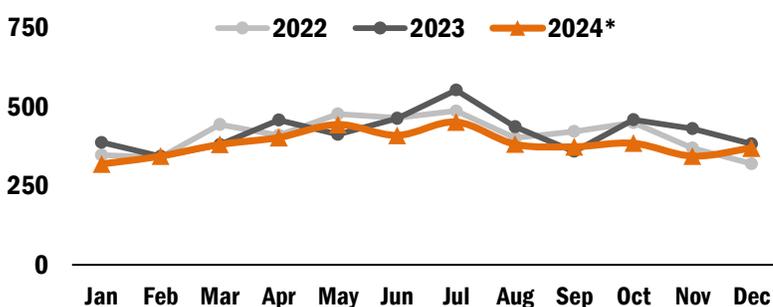
Firearm deaths are just the tip of the iceberg

For every 1 firearm death, there were 2 emergency department (ED) visits coded for firearm injury in NC.

NC-FASTER (Firearm Injury Surveillance Through Emergency Rooms) provides surveillance data in near real-time on ED visits for nonfatal firearm injuries based on diagnosis codes and free-text chief complaint information.

2024* Firearm injury ED visits slightly decreased from 2023, but remain overall similar to previous years.

Number of NC-FASTER Firearm ED Visits by Month, 2022-2024*



* 2024 NC FASTER ED visit data are provisional and subject to change, data as of 7/14/2025; Source: NC DETECT ED visit data, 2022-2024*, Firearm Injury - All Intents CDC V2

In 2024, males, young adults (18-24), and NH Black residents experienced a higher than expected burden of firearm-related injury ED visits.

- 79%** Males made up 79% of ED visits vs. 49% of the state population.
- 26%** 18- to 24-year-olds made up 26% of ED visits but only 9% of the population.
- 56%** NH Black residents made up 56% of ED visits vs. 22% of the population in NC.

NC-FASTER quarterly fact sheets with provisional data on nonfatal firearm injury ED visits are available [here](#) on the NC DETECT website.

Injury and Violence Prevention Branch Resources

- <https://injuryfreenc.dph.ncdhhs.gov/safestorage/index.htm>
- <https://injuryfreenc.dph.ncdhhs.gov/preventionResources/Suicide.htm>

National Resources

- The Suicide Prevention Resource Center: <https://sprc.org/>
- The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: <https://afsp.org/>

State Resources & Partners

- NC Office of Violence Prevention <https://www.ncdps.gov/about-dps/current-initiatives/north-carolina-office-violence-prevention>
- NC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner <https://www.ocme.dhhs.nc.gov/>
- Division of Child and Family Wellbeing <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/child-and-family-well-being>



NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Public Health
Injury and Violence Prevention Branch