

# FIREARM SAFETY TIPS FOR ALABAMIANS TO KEEP YOU, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOUR FRIENDS SAFE

If you are an experienced firearm user, you likely know about these tips already. Values commonly held by firearm users are safety, personal responsibility, and protection of family and others.

But, the 12 tips below may be useful reminders for you, as well as other experienced and new firearm owners.

1. **Before handling any firearm, especially for the first time, learn how to open and close the action safely and remove ammunition.** If you are not sure, get training before using it. Never assume that what applies to one type of firearm applies to another. Questions? Ask your firearms dealer.
2. **Treat every firearm as though it is loaded.** First, engage the safety and point it in a safe direction—down at the ground and away from your feet. Then, before opening the action, check to see if it may be loaded by carefully removing the magazine of a semi-automatic pistol or rifle or, if you hold a revolver, by opening the cylinder. Then, make sure the chamber is clear. If you do not know how to check the chamber, leave the firearm alone and ask someone who knows.
3. **Keep the muzzle or front end of the firearm's barrel pointed in a safe direction—preferably down—until ready to shoot.** Do this so that if your firearm accidentally fires it will not injure someone or cause damage.
4. **Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.** Keep your trigger finger extended, pointing forward, pressed against the side of the firearm and outside the trigger guard.
5. **Point a firearm only at something you intend to shoot.**
6. **Be sure to carefully identify your target and your surroundings.** Check that surroundings are safe—that no people are present. If the bullet misses or passes through the target it could hit a person or object. *If in doubt do not shoot.*

7. **Use only the appropriate ammunition for your firearm.** Only ammunition designed for your firearm is safe. Most firearms have the correct ammunition type stamped on the barrel.
  8. **Store your firearms safely and securely when not in use to prevent use by an unauthorized person, child, or someone at risk for suicide.** The best security is to store firearms unloaded in a gun case or safe. A less expensive method is to immobilize your firearm(s) unloaded with a cable or trigger lock(s) and keep the keys or combinations to the lock on your person or somewhere safe. Store ammunition separately. "Hiding" firearms in a closet, drawer, or on a top shelf could prove to be a deadly mistake. Anyone, including children, could find them if they search hard enough.
    - If you need quick access there are lockable cases that can be opened quickly.
    - Whichever option you choose, firearm safety devices are available at gun and sporting goods stores.
    - **If you yourself are in suicidal crisis, please have someone trustworthy hold on to your firearms until the crisis has pass**
  9. **For safe handling of a firearm**
    - Hand your firearm to someone else only after you engage the safety and point the barrel down. Best to hand it over unloaded.
    - Never handle a firearm when you're angry, depressed or in crisis. AND, please don't let anyone else who may be angry, depressed or in crisis access your firearm.
  10. **Never handle your firearm while impaired.** Impaired firearm users are dangerous to themselves and others.
  11. **Never shoot at water or at hard or flat surfaces.** The bullet may ricochet and hit someone.
  12. **Please wear ear and eye protection when shooting.** The noise can cause hearing damage while hot gasses or debris from the firearm can injure your eyes.
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**Thanks for reading these tips and for being a responsible firearm user.**

**Stay safe**