Out-of-Home Firearm Storage

Firearm Injury Prevention Initiative
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Rationale

- Temporarily reducing access to lethal means (especially firearms) is an effective strategy to prevent suicide

timing

The final decision to attempt suicide often occurs within only **minutes**

lethality

85-90% of people who use a gun to attempt suicide **die**

Hawton K. Crisis. 2007; Deisenhammer EA et al. J Clin Psychiatry. 2009; Owens D et al. British Journal of Psychiatry. 2002; Spicer RS et al. AJPH. 2000

Rationale

- Temporarily reducing access to lethal means (especially firearms) is an effective strategy to prevent suicide
- During times of crisis, temporary and voluntary out of home storage options may be appropriate and should be accessible
- There are additional circumstances where out-of-home storage could be desired

Out of Home Storage is Widely Used

Circumstance of Storage in Last 5 years	%
Travel out of town for an extended period	49.3
Buying, selling or renting home	20.6
Having young children in the home	22.9
Having teenagers in the home	13.0
Having older adults with dementia or other memory problems in the home	9.0
Having someone with concerning mental health or substance use in the home	**12.1**
Individual who is prohibited from having access to firearms is living or staying in the home	9.4
Divorce or separation	4.9
Military deployment	3.6
For a relative who passed away	4.9
During substance use, medical or mental health treatment of a household member	**5.4**
Court order	3.1

Barnard, L.M., Johnson, R.L., Brandspigel, S. *et al.* Practices, knowledge, and concerns for out-of-home firearm storage among those with access to firearms: results from a survey in two states. *Inj. Epidemiol.* **10**, 15 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-023-00426-9

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Many are Willing to Use Out of Home Storage

41% of US households with firearms were willing to store with **firearm businesses**

34% of US households with firearms were willing to store with **law enforcement agencies**

Paruk J, Wright-Kelly E, Barnard L, Anestis M. Owner Willingness to Temporarily Store Firearms With Firearm Retailers and Law Enforcement Agencies. JAMA Netw Open. 2025;8(7):e2521921. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.21921

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Out of Home Storage Options

Law enforcement
Firearm retailers
Shooting ranges

Pawn shops
Self-storage units
Military armories

Why Firearm Businesses?

- People trust them with their firearms, and they are trusted messengers of firearm safety.
- They are the nexus of providing education and services on all these ways to reduce firearm access to prevent firearm injuries and deaths.

Firearm Business Encounters

Gun Shop Project, Colorado

NSSF-AFSP Suicide Prevention Toolkit
https://www.nssf.org/safety/suicide-prevention/suicide-prevention-toolkit/

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Firearm Business Encounters

14% of Colorado firearms businesses participating the in the Gun Shop Project had provided temporary storage services to individuals they perceived to be in suicidal crisis in the past year

Wright-Kelly E, Buck-Atkinson JT, Betz ME, et al. Firearm businesses as partners in suicide prevention: a cross-sectional study of the Gun Shop Project in Colorado, USA. Inj Prev. Published online July 15, 2024. doi:10.1136/ip-2023-045178

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Firearm Storage National Map (of Retailers): Pause to Protect (data from Pierce's Pledge)

https://pausetoprotect.org/
(scroll down on home page)

Toolkit

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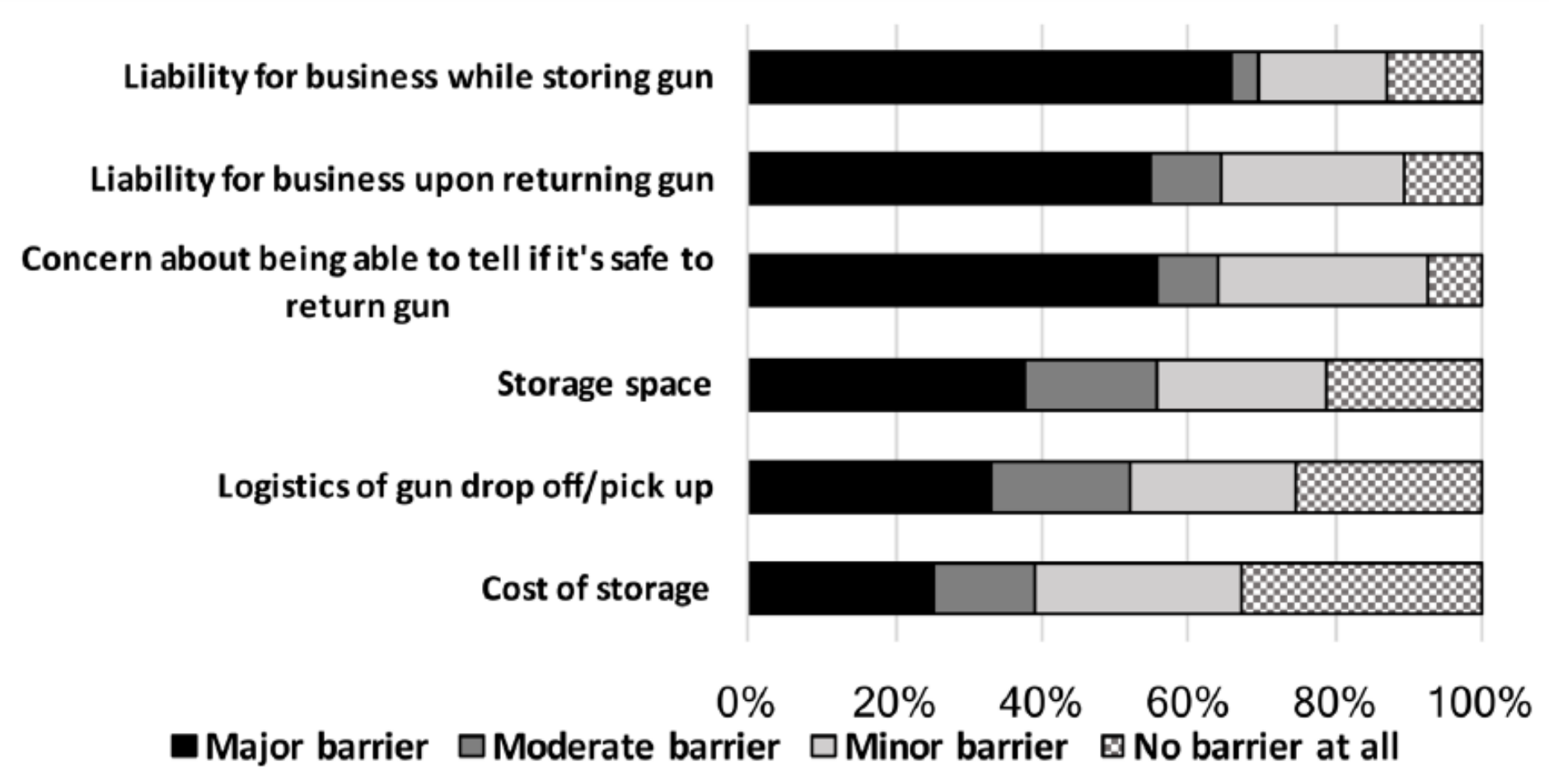
We know…

Firearm businesses want to offer out-of-home storage but *there are barriers*.

Firearm Business Barriers



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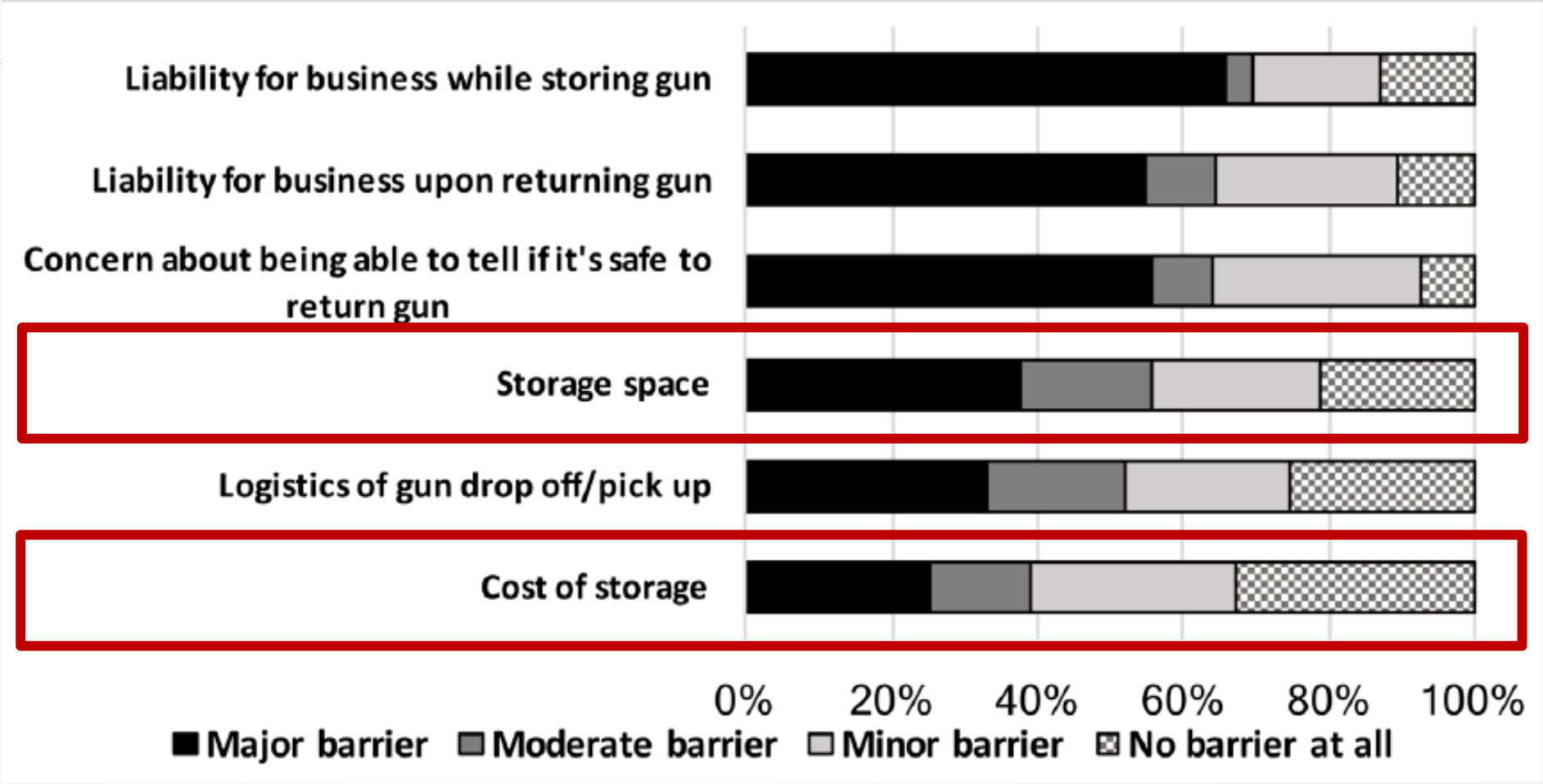
Firearm Business Barriers



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Address Concerns: Lockers/Space

~1 in 4

of US households with firearms would be **more** willing to store with firearm businesses if they installed lockers to temporarily store firearms (**without having to explain their storage decision or go through a background check**).

Paruk J, Wright-Kelly E, Barnard L, Anestis M. Owner Willingness to Temporarily Store Firearms With Firearm Retailers and Law Enforcement Agencies. JAMA Netw Open. 2025;8(7):e2521921. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.21921

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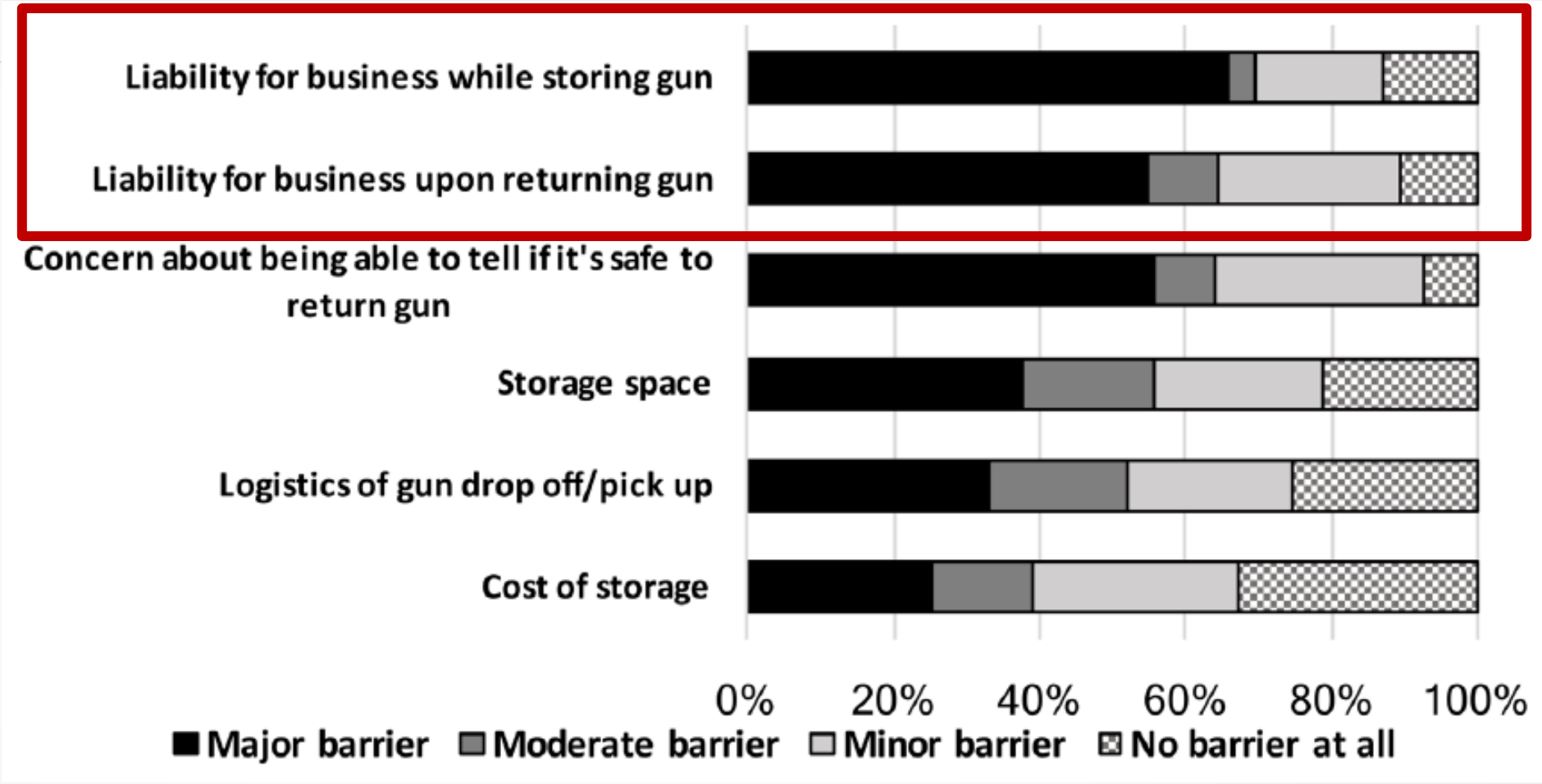

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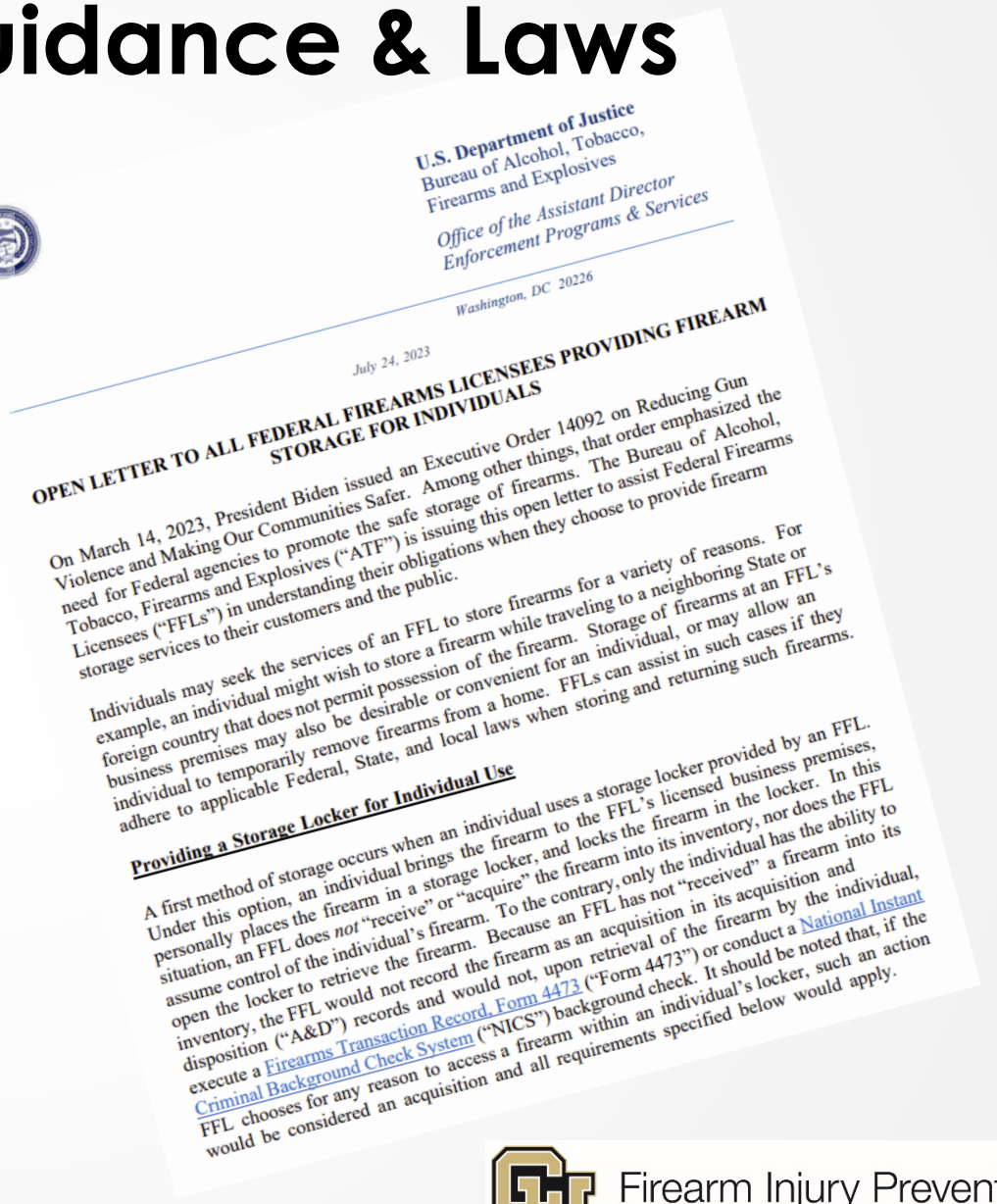
Address Concerns: Guidance & Laws

HB 260 in Louisiana

HB 1181 in Washington



U.S. Department of Justice
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,
Firearms and Explosives

Office of the Assistant Director
Enforcement Programs & Services

Washington, DC 20226

July 24, 2023

OPEN LETTER TO ALL FEDERAL FIREARMS LICENSEES PROVIDING FIREARM STORAGE FOR INDIVIDUALS

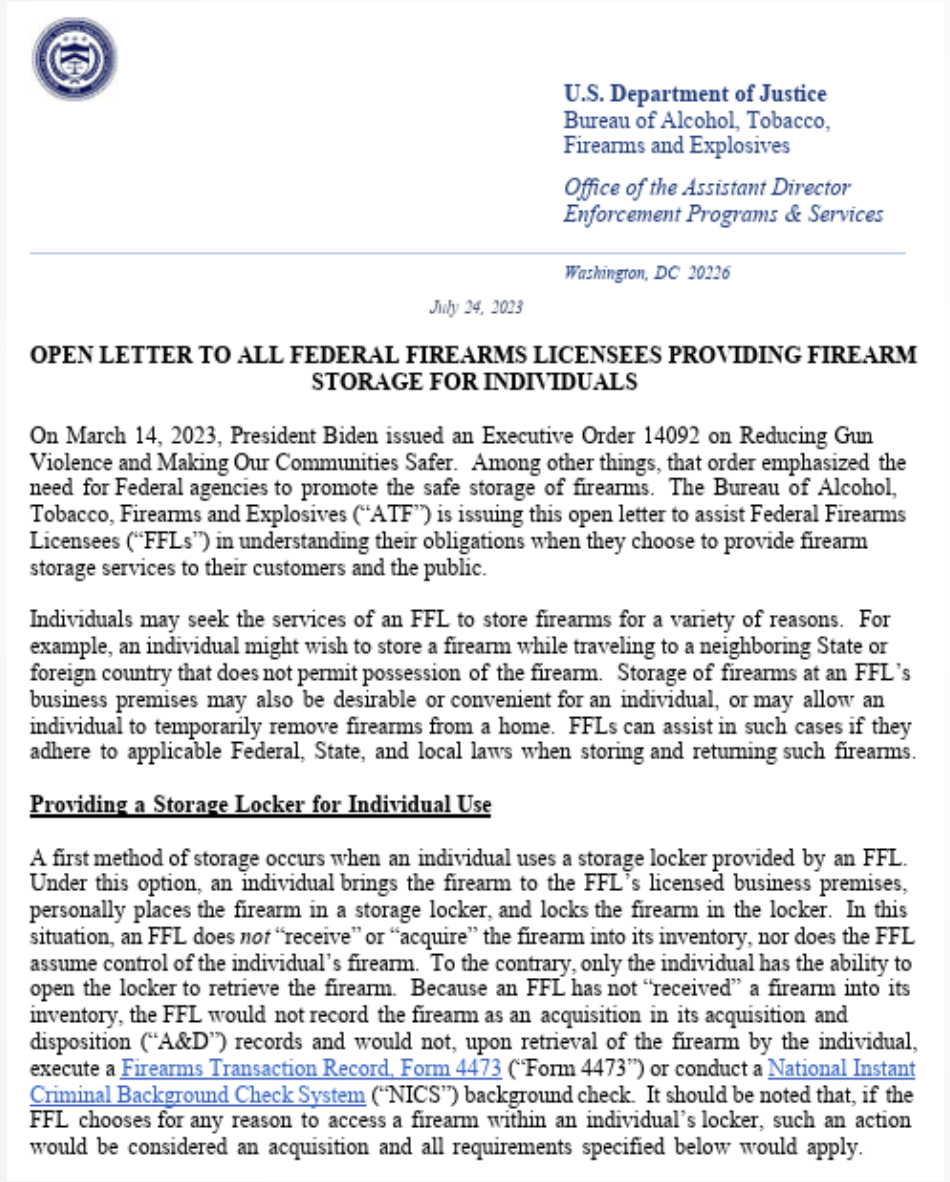
On March 14, 2023, President Biden issued an Executive Order 14092 on Reducing Gun Violence and Making Our Communities Safer. Among other things, that order emphasized the need for Federal agencies to promote the safe storage of firearms. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF") is issuing this open letter to assist Federal Firearms Licensees ("FFLs") in understanding their obligations when they choose to provide firearm storage services to their customers and the public.

Individuals may seek the services of an FFL to store firearms for a variety of reasons. For example, an individual might wish to store a firearm while traveling to a neighboring State or foreign country that does not permit possession of the firearm. Storage of firearms at an FFL's business premises may also be desirable or convenient for an individual, or may allow an individual to temporarily remove firearms from a home. FFLs can assist in such cases if they adhere to applicable Federal, State, and local laws when storing and returning such firearms.

Providing a Storage Locker for Individual Use

A first method of storage occurs when an individual uses a storage locker provided by an FFL. Under this option, an individual brings the firearm to the FFL's licensed business premises, personally places the firearm in a storage locker, and locks the firearm in the locker. In this situation, an FFL does *not* "receive" or "acquire" the firearm into its inventory, nor does the FFL assume control of the individual's firearm. To the contrary, only the individual has the ability to open the locker to retrieve the firearm. Because an FFL has not "received" a firearm into its inventory, the FFL would not record the firearm as an acquisition in its acquisition and disposition ("A&D") records and would not, upon retrieval of the firearm by the individual, execute a Firearms Transaction Record, Form 4473 ("Form 4473") or conduct a National Instant Criminal Background Check System ("NICS") background check. It should be noted that, if the FFL chooses for any reason to access a firearm within an individual's locker, such an action would be considered an acquisition and all requirements specified below would apply.

Address Concerns: ATF Open Letter



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https://www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/open-letter/all-ffls-july-2023-open-letter-safe-storage

Address Concerns: Logistical Support

I would love for somebody to be able to produce a one-page document explaining the steps that a shop could take if they were to do safe storage that would protect them from liability issues.

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Adress Concerns: Blueprint for Businesses

Pause to Protect Temporary Storage Options:

- Individual storage lockers
- Taking firearms under their control during storage
- Gunsmithing services with a storage component

Address Concerns: Blueprint for Businesses

TEMPORARY STORAGE PROGRAM RESOURCES

Secure Storage Agreement

Use this resource as a starting point to create a contract you can use when acquiring a customer's firearm for temporary storage at your location. **Note**: this and other contractual resources from Pause to Protect are not legal advice and should be reviewed with your legal counsel.

Download

Temporary Storage Program SOP

This resource can be modified to fit the process your staff must follow when acquiring a customer's firearm for temporary storage at your location.

Download

Firearm and Customer Information

This resource can be used to collect and document customer contact information and firearm-specific data when acquiring a customer's firearm for temporary storage at your location.

Download

TEMPORARY STORAGE LOCKER RESOURCES

Locker Rental Agreement

Use this resource as a starting point to create a contract you can use when renting a secure locker to customers for temporary storage at your location. **Note**: this and other contractual resources from Pause to Protect are not legal advice and should be reviewed with your legal counsel.

Download

Locker Rental SOP

This resource can be modified to fit the process your staff must follow when renting secure lockers to customers for temporary firearm storage at your location.

Download

Locker Rental Tracker

This resource can be helpful in keeping track of which lockers are rented to which customer.

Download

https://pausetoprotect.org/business-tools/temp-storage-services/

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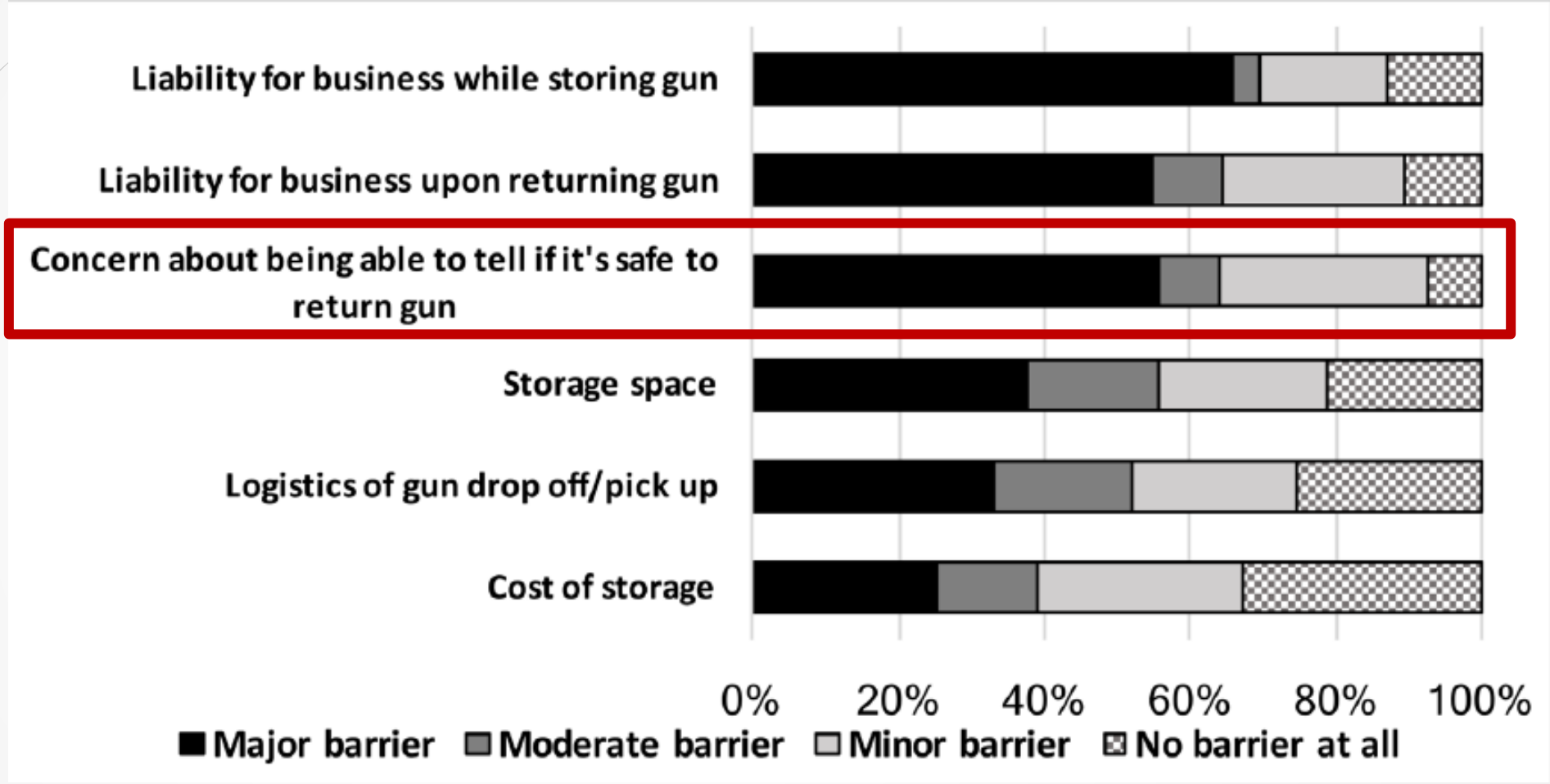
Address Concerns: Broaden the "Why"



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Address Concerns: Broaden the "Why"

Talking with Someone About Secure Firearm Storage

FOR CHILDREN

Firearm-related injuries are a leading cause of death among children, so it is crucial to ensure secure storage to prevent firearm misuse. Many of these injuries are the result of unauthorized access. Having a conversation about secure firearm storage around children can make a big difference.

TO PROTECT AGAINST FIREARM THEFT

Firearms that are stored insecurely in homes or vehicles are prime targets for thieves, and stolen firearms are frequently implicated in future firearm-related crimes. Storing firearms in locked containers reduces the chance of firearm theft and household firearms being used to facilitate other crimes.

FOR OLDER ADULTS

With normal aging, medical conditions, or medication use, older adults may show a mental or physical decline. If an older adult cannot safely control and operate a firearm, the risk of injury in the home increases if they can access a firearm. Taking steps to ensure an at-risk older adult can't access firearms can protect everyone's safety.

TO PROTECT AGAINST SUICIDE

Suicide attempts with a firearm are more deadly than attempts with other methods. Putting time and distance between a person in crisis and a firearm can help save a life. Preventing unauthorized access and enhancing secure storage practices – even if it is temporary – when someone in the home is going through a difficult time can make a difference.

Pause to Protect Educational Resource

Questions?

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