

Three Words Promote Safe Gun Storage in King County

Issue

In heart-felt letters to the editor, two King County, Washington mothers implored community members to lock up their guns after one of their sons accidentally shot the other with a gun found in his parent's bedroom closet. In King County this horrific situation could happen in any one of the 19,000 households that reported having firearms stored loaded and unlocked.

An accidental shooting isn't the only potential consequence when safe gun storage is overlooked—suicide and intentional shootings are also a risk. Public Health–Seattle & King County and their partners are trying to prevent these tragedies with three words promoting an action that could save lives: **lock it up**.

Intervention

LOK-IT-UP is a public education awareness campaign created by Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center to promote the safe storage of firearms. The campaign is an effort to improve safety in the community by creating partnerships between firearm retailers, firearm owners, parents, schools, law enforcement, elected officials, and community organizations. Together, these partners promote safe gun storage by encouraging gun owners to purchase firearm security devices and providing them with training and education.

In 2007, Public Health–Seattle & King County used Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant funds toward multiple efforts including:

- **Tracking the sales of safe storage devices** through partnerships with wholesalers, retail stores, and gun dealers
- **Training for health specialists and health care providers** on how to speak with clients about safe firearm storage
- **Updating the LOK-IT-UP Web site (www.lokitup.org)** which received over 182,000 hits in 2007
- **An interactive display** used at firing ranges, gun dealers, and health conferences that illustrates safe storage options for gun owners
- **Tailoring resources for special populations**, including translating educational materials into Spanish
- **Working with media sources** to supply information and data on safe gun storage

Impact

Sales of safe storage devices were tracked at two local sporting good stores before and after the LOK-IT-UP campaign began.

- Sportco reported \$1,419,689 in annual sales of firearm security devices, an increase of nearly \$220,000 since tracking began
- Costco reported annual sales of 9,500 lock boxes in 2007, a huge increase from the 50 sold in the first year of tracking

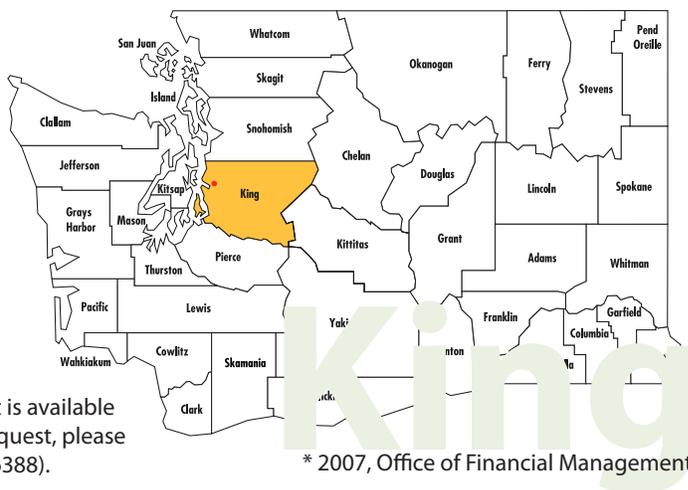
Public Health–Seattle & King County is working hard with its partners and block grant funding to make sure that safe gun practices are learned through LOK-IT-UP and not through another preventable tragedy.

County population*: 1,861,300

Public Health–Seattle & King County
Seattle, Washington
www.kingcounty.gov/health



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* 2007, Office of Financial Management