

Vision

We have created a safe environment for ourselves and the children and elders in our care. We have the information that we need to make informed decisions about the risks in our daily lives. We feel supported in being transparent about our gun ownership.

Needs/Requests

Autonomy. We want to honor individuals' autonomy within their own homes.

Safety. We want to minimize the risks to community members from the discharge of firearms by their owners or by children who might find them.

Connection, choice. We want to give people the opportunity to make informed choices before visiting homes which may have firearms in them.

Vision and Values

Our firearm safety policy supports our community Values of:

- **A Diverse Community.** We honor that cultural attitudes toward and experiences with firearms vary greatly. We wish to assure community members' safety while allowing for personal autonomy.
- **Safety and Trust.** We wish to feel confident that firearms owned or stored by Cohoots are not a threat to us in our daily lives due to mischance.
- **Balancing Community and Privacy.** We allow for privacy, after ensuring that individuals are aware of community expectations for the safe storage and transport of firearms.

History

A previous "gun policy" proposal (March 2006) at Coho requested both that no one have firearms at Coho and that people alert the community if they had firearms at Coho. This policy faced vocal opposition, especially from individuals no longer at Coho, and did not achieve consensus.

Assumptions

- Some Coho members feel safer with guns in the community and some Coho members feel safer without guns in the community.
- Some Coho community members will feel safer if they believe firearms are stored at Coho in ways recommended by firearm safety experts.
- Visitors to Coho units with a firearm, may want to know that there are firearms present, to meet the visitors' need for safety.
- The physical structure/walls at Coho will not stop rounds from firearms. An accidental discharge of a firearm in a Coho home could cause injury in an adjacent room, an adjacent home or on the path outside.

Policy

Firearms may not be discharged anywhere on Coho property.

Anyone storing a firearm in their Coho home or elsewhere “on campus” will keep the gun(s) locked, and any ammunition separately locked elsewhere.

We are open with our neighbors if they ask about the presence of guns in our homes.

Appendix

Advice from the American Academy of Pediatricians (healthykids.org):

More than 44 million Americans own firearms. Of the 192 million firearms owned in the United States, 65 million are handguns. Research shows guns in homes are a serious risk to families.

- A gun kept in the home is 43 times more likely to kill someone known to the family than to kill someone in self-defense.
- A gun kept in the home triples the risk of homicide.
- The risk of suicide is 5 times more likely if a gun is kept in the home.

Advice to parents

The best way to keep your children safe from injury or death from guns is to NEVER have a gun in the home.

- Do not purchase a gun, especially a handgun.
- Remove all guns present in the home.
- Talk to your children about the dangers of guns, and tell them to stay away from guns.
- Find out if there are guns in the homes where your children play. If so, talk to the adults in the house about the dangers of guns to their families.

For those who know the dangers of guns but still keep a gun in the home:

- Always keep the gun unloaded and locked up.
- Lock and store the bullets in a separate place.
- Make sure to hide the keys to the locked boxes

The Six Basic Gun Safety Rules

From <http://oag.ca.gov/firearms/tips>

- 1. Treat all guns as if they are loaded.** Always assume that a gun is loaded even if you think it is unloaded. Every time a gun is handled for any reason, check to see that it is unloaded.

2. **Keep the gun pointed in the safest possible direction.** Always be aware of where a gun is pointing. A “safe direction” is one where an accidental discharge of the gun will not cause injury or damage. Only point a gun at an object you intend to shoot. Never point a gun toward yourself or another person.
3. **Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.** Always keep your finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard until you are ready to shoot. If you are moving around with your finger on the trigger and stumble or fall, you could inadvertently pull the trigger. Sudden loud noises or movements can result in an accidental discharge because there is a natural tendency to tighten the muscles when startled.
4. **Know your target, its surroundings, and beyond.** Check that the areas in front of and behind your target are safe before shooting. Be aware that if the bullet misses or completely passes through the target, it could strike a person or object. Be aware of all the people around you before you shoot.
5. **Know how to properly operate your gun.** It is important to become thoroughly familiar with your gun. You should know its mechanical characteristics including how to properly load, unload and clear a malfunction from your gun.
6. **Store your gun safely and securely to prevent unauthorized use.** Guns and ammunition should be stored separately. When the gun is not in your hands, you must still think of safety. Use a California-approved firearms safety device on the gun, such as a trigger lock or cable lock, so it cannot be fired. Store it unloaded in a locked container, such as a California-approved lock box or a gun safe. Store your gun in a different location than the ammunition. For maximum safety you should use both a locking device and a storage container.

Related Documents

(none so far)

Revision History

This policy was created and initially approved by community consensus on November 17, 2013.

This policy was reviewed with minor edits and approved April 26, 2018.