

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

County of San Mateo to Require Safe Firearms Storage at Home *Board of Supervisors adopt ordinance requiring locked containers, trigger locks*

Redwood City — Firearms owners in unincorporated San Mateo County who store their weapons at home must keep the weapon in a locked container or disabled with a trigger lock under new safety requirements adopted today by the Board of Supervisors.

The Board voted 5-0 in favor of the new ordinance which includes the caveat that those who report the loss or theft of a firearms they own or possess to a local law enforcement agency within five days they knew or should have known it was missing shall not be prosecuted for violating the locked container provision. Violations will carry criminal prosecution and/or civil penalties.

Supervisor Dave Pine, who introduced the ordinance with fellow Supervisor David Canepa, called the new requirements a reasonable approach to avoid potential tragedies.

“Many instances of gun violence occur in the home. To help prevent accidental shootings, gun-related homicides and suicides, and the theft of unsecured firearms, the County of San Mateo is seeking commonsense requirements for secure storage of firearms in the home, requirements which are not explicitly required for all gun owners under California state law,” Pine said.

A 2008 report published in the New England Journal of Medicine concluded that living in a home where guns are kept increased an individual’s risk of death by homicide by between 40 percent and 170 percent. A separate 2004 national study pinned the increased risk of death by homicide at 90 percent.

“This is a commonsense approach that will protect children from accidental gun deaths. This is simple measure that will significantly decrease the risk that a gun will be used to commit suicide, homicide or cause injury,” Canepa said.

In San Mateo County specifically, 301 gun-related deaths occurred over the past 10 years. Data collected from participants in a 2018 Citizens for a San Mateo County Gun Buy Back event reported they were surrendering the weapons for “safety reasons” and nearly half said they did not know how

to properly store an inherited firearm. Several considered hiding the weapon or keeping it unloaded as adequate safety measures.

“Our survey demonstrates that there are gun owners in our county with limited knowledge regarding safe storage,” said Danielle Lacampagne, founder of Citizens for a San Mateo County Gun Buyback. “Of particular note, buyback participants who still had firearms at home — close to 40 percent — greatly appreciated the free cable locks we handed out at buyback events. The timing is right for such an ordinance in San Mateo County.”

The ordinance will take effect 30 days after a second reading at the Feb. 26, 2019 Board of Supervisors meeting. The new regulations only apply to residents in the unincorporated areas of the county.

The complete Board agenda packet and meeting video, when posted, is available at, <https://sanmateocounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

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