



# LETHAL MEANS SAFETY TOOLKIT

RESOURCES FOR SOLDIERS, THEIR FAMILIES AND CIVILIANS

THIS IS OUR ARMY.



**DIRECTORATE OF PREVENTION, RESILIENCE AND READINESS**



**SP2**  
SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

Military Crisis Line: Dial 988 and press 1  
[www.armyresilience.army.mil](http://www.armyresilience.army.mil)

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This Toolkit was developed by subject matter experts at the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness (DPRR) with the help of Army Command Suicide Prevention Program Managers (SPPM), public health and prevention experts in academia, and the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO).

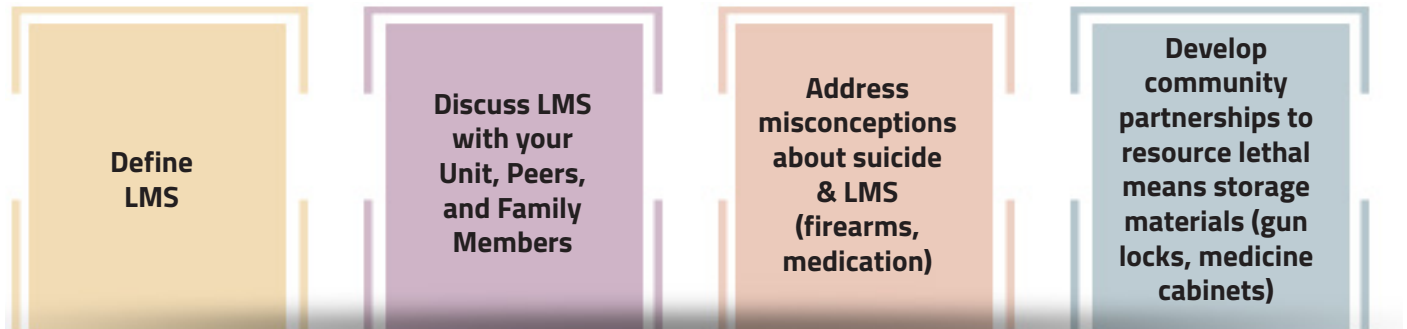




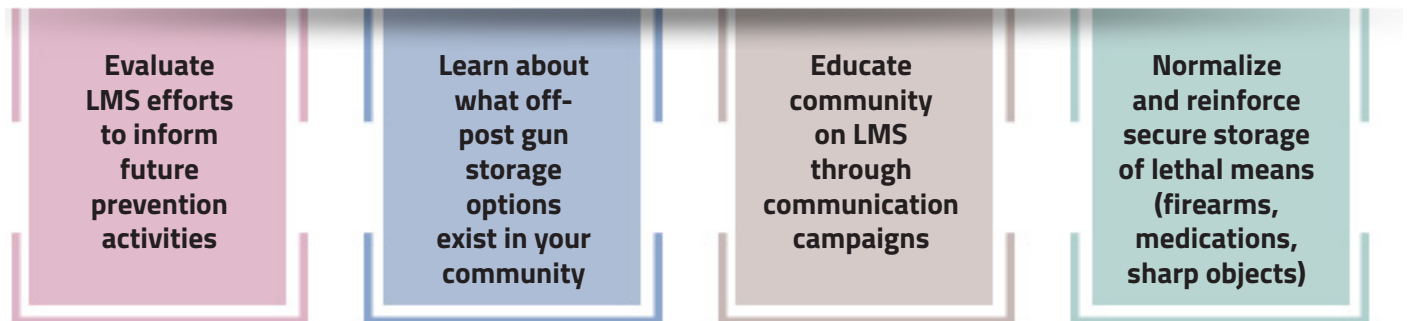
## I. Introduction

### Purpose:

This Toolkit is intended for use by Army Personnel. The purpose of this Toolkit is to educate Army personnel about Lethal Means Safety (LMS) and provide guidance and resources on how to integrate LMS in their roles, specifically as they relate to reducing harmful behaviors and preventing suicide. Some goals and objectives for this Toolkit are included in the figure below:



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THIS TOOLKIT



Army personnel should feel empowered to apply the knowledge and skills and utilize the resources discussed in this Toolkit. This Toolkit will enable users to expand their understanding of LMS and engage with the Army community to build a more protective environment and prevent future risk. A key goal of this Toolkit is to make LMS normal, easy, and universal across the Army enterprise. Through education and resource sharing, DPRR stakeholders encourage our prevention community to build upon our existing strong intervention and risk-identification systems and expand our upstream violence prevention efforts.

### What is Lethal Means Safety (LMS)?

LMS is an intentional and voluntary practice to increase time and space between an individual and a lethal mean<sup>30</sup> (firearm, medication, asphyxiation device), therefore reducing the risk of **intentional** harm (suicide, domestic violence) and **accidental** harm (injury or death). LMS is often discussed as part of suicide risk reduction, as the more lethal a mean or method used in a suicide attempt, the higher the likelihood of an individual dying by suicide. In other words, intent is not the only factor that determines whether an individual dies by suicide - means also matter<sup>15</sup>. The Army is focusing efforts toward improving LMS knowledge and encouraging secure storage across the enterprise to reduce suicide and encourage violence and accidental injury prevention more broadly. LMS is about creating a safe environment for Soldiers and their Families, regardless of risk status.



## LMS and Suicide Prevention

Firearms are the primary method (~70%) in Army suicides for both Soldiers and dependents<sup>13</sup>; however, stigma and misconceptions regarding LMS, specifically with firearms, remain common within the military<sup>1</sup>. For instance, many gun owners believe there is no relationship between safe firearm storage practices and deaths by suicide. Unfortunately, deaths by suicide are higher in homes with a firearm and research shows that securely storing weapons reduces risk for deaths by suicide<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, while owning a firearm does not cause someone to be suicidal, storing a loaded firearm at home increases risk for dying by suicide four to six times<sup>2,10,21-22</sup>. Ways to challenge these misconceptions include education and the dissemination of materials with accurate information related to suicide and lethal means.

### Common Misconceptions



#### MISCONCEPTIONS

**The majority of Service members who die by suicide had a mental illness.**

**If you remove access to one lethal method of suicide, someone at risk for suicide will replace it with another.**

**Talking about suicide will lead to and encourage suicide.**

**Owning a firearm is not associated with suicide risk.**



#### FACTS

**The majority of Service members who die by suicide were not diagnosed with mental illness.**

**When one method for suicide is removed, someone at risk is unlikely to substitute with a different method.**

**Talking about suicide provides the other person with an opportunity to express thoughts and feelings about something they may be keeping secret, and/or obtain help and support**

**Owning a firearm does not cause someone to be suicidal; however, storing a loaded firearm at home increases risk for dying by suicide four to six times.**

**Figure 1. Common Suicide and LMS Misconceptions<sup>10</sup>**

Some of the prevention strategies, policies and authoritative documents that include LMS and have been disseminated across the enterprise are listed below:

- [DoDI 6490.16](#), *Defense Suicide Prevention Program* (2017, Change 2: 2020)<sup>12</sup>
- [DoDI 6400.09](#), *DoD Policy on Integrated Primary Prevention of Self-Directed Harm and Prohibited Abuse or Harm* (2020)<sup>14</sup>
- [White House Strategy for Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide](#)<sup>32</sup> (2021)
- [Army Regulation 600-92](#), *Army Suicide Prevention Program*<sup>27</sup> (2023)
- [Army Strategy for the Prevention of Suicide](#)<sup>26,28</sup> (2020, 2022)
- [CDC Suicide Prevention Strategies](#)<sup>4,6-8</sup> (2021)



## How do we Practice LMS?

Recent data has revealed that many Soldiers' reasons for storing firearms loaded and unlocked in the home are related to home safety and familial protection<sup>1</sup>. In an organization that prides itself on force protection, it is understandable that cultural definitions of safety would focus on protecting self or community from external threat (home invasion). As we incorporate LMS across the enterprise, we implore individuals to expand their definition of safety to account for internal threat, or threat to self or others in your household, that improperly stored lethal means may pose. Further, we encourage individuals to expand their ability to assess for internal and external threats and make informed decisions regarding secure storage of lethal means. Examples of secure storage include securely storing medications (high shelf, medicine cabinet) and firearms (unloaded, locked, and separate from ammunition) and are effective ways to reduce the risk of **accidental** injuries and deaths (children), while reducing **intentional** injuries and deaths (domestic violence, homicides, and suicides). Discussing LMS and the role these behaviors play in keeping individuals safe can challenge common misconceptions regarding lethal means and risk and facilitate discussions around a complex topic. This cultural shift will require dedication and advocacy by leadership and stakeholders. Some proven LMS strategies include:



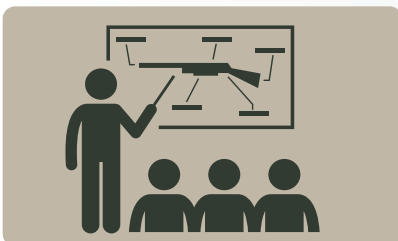
### Environmental Engineering Solutions

- Improve availability of firearm storage on and off-post.
- Partner with gun-retailers
- Promote locking devices like lock box, life jackets for long guns, etc.
- Encourage lock boxes or cabinets and timer or lock caps for medicine storage and pill bottles.



### Community & Culture Interventions

- Normalizing secure storage practices (firearms, medication, sharp objects)
- Share repeated messages from trusted messengers over time
- Change attitudes, beliefs, and skills about lethal means messages



### Targeted Individual Efforts

- Support education on firearms safety as part of multiple prevention topics like suicide prevention, alcohol and other drug abuse, general health and wellness
- Improve skills and tools for clinicians or trusted figures aimed towards at-risk individuals



## II. Starting a Conversation About LMS?

As a concerned loved one, friend, leader, or care provider, you have the responsibility to initiate a conversation about safely handling and storing lethal means. Starting a conversation with a Soldier or family member in or out of crisis can help them feel cared for and make them aware of what resources are available to them. Together, checking in and sharing safety information helps to mitigate risk and create protective environments while strengthening social supports and reducing stigma. A securely stored mean (firearm, medicine) can make the difference between loss of life and a life saved.

### Conversation Considerations<sup>16,18,29</sup>

The following sections include conversation starters for discussing LMS. They are most successful when the conversation is collaborative rather than instructive. An individual is the only person that can decide to change their behavior and find the motivation to do so. This is achievable when the conversation is person-centered and draws on personal motivators or reasons for securely storing lethal means. In other words, discussing LMS as it relates to the individuals' desires, safety, and protection of self and others. When possible, there should be ongoing follow-up regarding LMS and general safety.

### When Having Conversations, Consider:

- Your relationship with the person
- Your knowledge and comfort with lethal means (guns, medication)
- The urgency of the situation

- Reasons for unsafe storage practices
- Identify and troubleshoot barriers to secure storage



#### **REMINDER:**

*Asking someone about suicidal thoughts or self-harm does not increase their risk for self-harm or put the idea in their head. Soldiers might welcome the opportunity to talk about their feelings and someone reaching out to express concern can help them feel less alone at a hopeless time.*



## When someone is NOT IN CRISIS...<sup>16</sup>



- Majority of gun-owning veterans are accepting and receptive of firearm interventions.<sup>31</sup>
- Firearms used in youth suicide usually belong to a parent.
- Almost 500 people die from accidental firearm injuries every year, more than one person each day.<sup>5</sup>

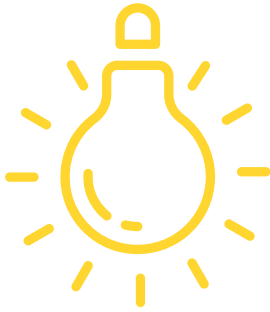
### WHAT WE KNOW

Starting a conversation about LMS can be challenging, and some individuals may become defensive if you try to talk about secure storage or lethal means. Frame your conversation around protecting others – Family, friends, or children who may not know how to properly handle a firearm or manage medication, which could result in accidental injury or death.

### Asking about LMS...

- *I know you have young kids in the house, how are you currently storing your gun(s)?*
- *What concerns do you have about taking extra steps to store your gun?*
- *The SPPM got some gun locks in, do you need one? Do you use them, why/why not?*
- *With teenagers in the house, it's important to get rid of old medications, especially opioids (e.g., prescription painkillers). When was the last time you cleaned out your medicine cabinet? Do you know where/how to dispose of old medicine?*
  - » [Find a Disposal Site](#)
- *What else can we do to create a safer environment, maybe removing substances (drugs, alcohol) from the house that can impact your judgement or make things worse?*
- *You seem like you're going through a tough time. I would feel better if I held on to your gun(s) for a while. Even if you're not worried about yourself, I am.*

## When someone may be IN CRISIS...<sup>18,29</sup>



- **Most suicidal crises are brief, so extra time and space in this critical period can make a lifesaving difference.<sup>22</sup>**
- **Most individuals who attempt suicide do not go on to make another attempt.<sup>19</sup>**
- **LMS effectively reduces suicide.**

### WHAT WE KNOW

**Crisis Lines and resources are listed in Appendix 2**

Conversations around suicide and LMS are meant to provide support, not 'fix' a problem. You do not need to be a clinical professional to make an impact on someone's safety and support. Start by expressing your concerns about their safety and your wish to keep them safe.

### Open the door to a conversation...

- *I know you've been going through a tough time, how are you doing?*
- *I wanted to check in with you because you haven't seemed like yourself lately.*
- *I was thinking about you and wanted to reach out.*

### Questions to ask...

- If you don't already know, asking *When did you first start feeling like this?* or *Did something happen that made you begin to feel this way?* can provide valuable context to your conversation.
- *What can I do to best support you right now?*
- *Are you having thoughts of suicide?*
- *Have you thought about or tried to get help?*





## How to respond...

- *I hate that you're going through such a rough time. I'm here for you, and I want to help you in any way I can.*
- *I might not be able to understand exactly what you're going through, but I care about you and want to help.*
- *I am worried about you. Can we figure out what to do with your firearms until you're feeling better?* (See Secure Storage: Firearms section)
- *We all know what can happen when someone is feeling hopeless. Can I (or friend/family member) help you store your firearm(s) until this storm passes? Let's talk through some temporary storage options...* (see Secure Storage: Firearms section)
- *Has this happened before? How did you get through it then?*
- *I can imagine that all of this is very overwhelming. When you want to give up try focusing on just getting through the next minute, hour, or day — whatever you can manage. Call me (or a trusted friend) and I (they) can sit with you until it passes.*
- *Have you ever worked on a crisis plan? Do you remember who you listed as people who you can reach out to when you're feeling this way?*
  - » [Safety Plan](#) and [Crisis Response Plan](#) Templates
  - » CONUS AND OCONUS Crisis Lines are listed in Appendix 2. Have them save the appropriate numbers in their phone and identify one or more individual(s) they can call when they are struggling, including you (if appropriate).

## Asking About LMS...<sup>18,29</sup>

Conversations around suicide and LMS are meant to provide support, not 'fix' a problem. You do not need to be a clinical professional to make an impact on someone's safety and support. Start by expressing your concerns about their safety and your wish to keep them safe.

- *You seem like you're going through a tough time. I would feel better if I held on to your gun(s) for a while. Even if you're not worried about yourself, I am.*
- *I am worried about you. Can we figure out what to do with your firearms until you're feeling better?* (See Secure Storage: Firearms section)
- *We all know what can happen when someone is feeling hopeless. Can I (or friend/family member) help you store your firearm(s) until this storm passes? Let's talk through some temporary storage options...* (see Secure Storage: Firearms section)



**Suggest that they take the following steps to keep themselves and their family safe:**

### Quick LMS Reference<sup>15</sup>



#### GUNS

- Keep guns unloaded and locked when not in use to prevent children and/or unauthorized adults from accessing them.
- Store ammunition separately from firearms and out of the reach of children and unauthorized adults.
- Request a gunlock from your local VA Suicide Prevention Coordinator (SPC): [VA Resource Locator](#)
- If a member of your family is going through a challenging time and is at increased risk of suicide, the safest option for any household firearms is to store them away from home until the person has recovered (See Secure Storage: Firearms section on page 14).



#### MEDICATION

- Store medication on higher shelves or in a locked medicine cabinet.
- Store medicine in daily doses using bags or pill containers.
- Dispose of old, unused medication at a designated drop off center: [Find One Near You](#).
- Don't keep lethal doses of medications at home and/or only fill medication for the amount needed. Your doctor, pharmacist, or the poison control center may be able to help you determine safe quantities.
- Be particularly aware of keeping prescription painkillers (e.g., oxycodone) stored in a locked medicine cabinet due to their lethality and potential for abuse by children and unauthorized adults.



#### OTHER

- Store sharp objects in locked safes, cabinets, or drawers to prevent children and/or unauthorized adults from accessing them.
- Breakaway bars can be installed in the home and barracks (closets, showers) to prevent hanging attempts.

### Other helpful resources...

- Conversation Guides:
  - » Veterans Crisis Line [Conversation Guide](#)<sup>29</sup>
  - » Overwatch Project [Conversation Guide](#)<sup>18</sup>
- Develop a [Safety Plan](#) or [Crisis Response Plan](#) for times of stress or crisis that include ways to practice LMS
- Crisis and Non-Crisis Lines and Resources are included in Appendix 2.



### III. Creating a Protective Environment

Everyone can play a role in creating a community of safety - from household members to the broader community. The goal is to make LMS feel **easy, normal, and universal** in our Army culture:

- Easy** to access safety materials and actions,
- Normal** in our community and day-to-day lives, and
- Universally** practiced.

This shift in culture often begins with education and the dissemination of resources. When considering safety actions as they relate to suicide prevention and lethal means, many public health resources exist to challenge common misconceptions, encourage secure storage, and share knowledge:

#### Examples of Prevention Campaigns

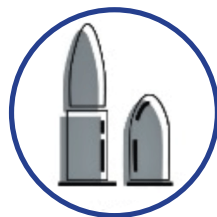
To provide ideas, examples, and strategies for consideration and/or inspiration for local-level LMS campaign implementation, some public health LMS campaigns are included below. These campaigns can be adapted and expanded to include other lethal means and/or target specific populations (Soldiers, parents, care providers).

#### 5L's<sup>20</sup>

When we consider LMS, we often think of how it can prevent suicide. In addition to reducing risk for suicide, practicing LMS also reduces the risk for unintended injury and death due to mishandling of firearms and medication. [Researchers](#) developed the 5 L's mnemonic device to reduce the risk for unintended injury or death:



**Locked**  
Is it locked?



**Loaded**  
Is it loaded?



**Little Children**  
Are there young children present?



**Feeling Low**  
Is the operator/owner feeling low?



**Learned**  
Is the operator learned/familiar with firearm safety?



### Air Force GoSLO<sup>11</sup>

Going SLO for Prevention: Time-Based Prevention in the Department of the Air Force aims to put time and space between a person in distress and lethal means with a goal to delay access to a firearm by at least five minutes. Airmen in distress/at risk are encouraged to “go SLO”

- Uses **S**afes,
- L**ocks, or
- store firearms **O**utside the home

SLO will be incorporated into Air Force culture, much like previous efforts related to alcohol use and driving. Messaging campaigns will initially focus on suicide prevention and evolve to SLO as a general safety practice regardless of suicide risk and/or Airman distress.



### The Harvard Injury Control Research Center’s Means Matter Initiative<sup>15</sup>

The mission of the Means Matter Campaign is to increase the proportion of suicide prevention groups who promote activities that reduce a suicidal person’s access to lethal means of suicide and who develop active partnerships with gun owner groups to prevent suicide.

#### [Example of Means Safety Programs by State](#)

Means Matter



Of note, these campaigns do not target interventions based on risk-assessment, rather they prioritize creating a protective environment that is resilient to threat, regardless of risk status. Initiatives to promote LMS are most effective when carried out by and with the support of Commands and communities. To increase the acceptability of LMS initiatives in your community, it is recommended to:

- Identify local influencers
- Develop unit- or place-specific messages, and
- Integrate multi-disciplinary stakeholders

#### Consider:

- Who can deliver these messages?
- Who is the best messenger for LMS?

#### A messenger should be:

- Trusted
- Competent
- Believable



## Army LMS Communications Materials

DPRR has developed and collected communication and marketing materials to inform and equip local-level campaigns to incorporate LMS into your communities:

- DPRR Resources
  - » DPRR's [LMS Communication Materials](#)
    - [LMS Fact Sheet](#)
    - Poster: [How to Safely Store Firearms](#)
    - Poster: [Best Ways to Store Medication](#)
  - » DPRR's [Reducing Access to Lethal Means](#)
  - » DPRR's LMS [Webpage](#)
- [Army Regulation 600-92](#)<sup>27</sup> has recommendations and guidelines for developing promotional materials (Public Service Announcements) related to suicide prevention and LMS.
- Other Resources:
  - » [Suicide and Emotion Dysregulation Lab Communication Materials](#)
  - » [DSPO Suicide Prevention and Secure Storage Brochure for Firearm Owners](#)

## Community Partnerships: Safety is Everyone's Concern

In recent years, the Army has been able to purchase gun locks and safes for distribution across the Commands<sup>17</sup>. Your local Army Suicide Prevention Program Coordinator (SPPC) should have knowledge of the availability of those materials and how to request them. However, this funding and availability is not guaranteed. As such, we want to empower professionals at the local level to develop community partnerships to resource these materials for free or at a reduced rate through local VAs, law enforcement offices, and firearm retailers. Tools to identify and foster these partnerships are included below:

- **DSPO's [Suicide Prevention: In Collaboration with Firearm Retailers](#)**  
*Suicide Prevention Coordinators and other stakeholders can use this Toolkit to establish collaborative relationships with firearm retailers, including staff in private retail stores and at military exchanges, on and off installation.*
- **VA's [Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business: A Toolkit for Safe Firearm Storage in Your Community](#)**  
*Together VA, the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) have compiled tips for safely storing firearms as well as best practices for sharing these guidelines in your community. Responsible firearm ownership begins by understanding secure storage and the steps for properly securing firearms in your home.*
- **Harvard's Means Matter [Gun Shop Project](#)**<sup>15</sup>  
*Includes a list of statewide LMS program links and contact information.*



## Feedback & Evaluation

In the event that Army personnel adopt or disseminate the campaigns and materials listed in the sections above, or implement their own LMS campaigns, it is recommended to monitor and evaluate such programs. The recommendation to monitor and evaluate prevention programming is noted across strategies and policies described in the U.S Army Strategy for the Prevention of Suicide.<sup>28</sup> Evaluation provides an opportunity to understand the utility and acceptability of resources, trainings, etc. and to monitor the fidelity and demonstrated effectiveness of pilot programs. It is particularly important when instituting novel efforts, like those related to LMS, as continuous monitoring and evaluation provides feedback to determine the effectiveness of programs (fidelity in implementation, fulfilling their intended goals and objectives) and allows for prevention personnel across the enterprise to identify areas of need or improvement<sup>3</sup>. For existing and new LMS campaigns and efforts, it is recommended to track and encourage feedback on the use of the materials linked in this Toolkit (e.g., focus groups and key leader interviews) of safety storage device distribution and intended use, community partnerships, feedback on ways to improve these materials, etc. Additionally, the Army published an [Initiative Evaluation Process Guide](#)<sup>25</sup> to assist with developing and expanding initiatives that are effective in improving the health and safety of the Total Army Family. Tools and resources to inform local-level evaluation and tracking of these efforts are listed below:

### Evaluation Resources (Included in Appendix 3)

- Performance Measurement Indicators
- LMS Logic Model
- SMART Objectives Model
- Compliance Checklist Model



## IV. Firearm Leadership

Firearm owners know and value safety more than the average person. As such, they are appropriate agents to model and carry out secure storage efforts in our community, including Firearm Leadership. Firearm Leadership involves knowledge and proficiency in firearm handling and safety at work and in the home, to include knowledge of threats and actions taken to reduce the risk of intentional (self-directed) and accidental firearm injury and death. This might include secure storage, routine training and operations, risk identification and mitigation, and the normalization of lethal means safety conversations and behaviors. Safety in the context of Lethal Means starts with storage. Educating Soldiers, Families, and Leadership on personal firearm storage options allows for informed decision-making when someone is in and out of crisis. A culture of LMS reduces the risk of intentional and accidental injury and death. Resources and recommendations for firearm-specific storage options are included in the Secure Storage section below. This information was resourced from the [U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs' Community Firearm Storage Toolkit](#) and Harvard's [Questions about Removing or Storing Firearms](#).

### Secure Storage: Firearms

#### ON POST

Instructions for on-post handling and storing of weapons is included in [Army Regulation 190-11](#)<sup>24</sup>. Additionally, Chapter 4 in the regulation includes guidance on securely storing weapons. Some main takeaways include:

- All personnel residing on an installation are required to register their firearms.
- Firearms brought onto post or purchased on post will be registered in the ALERTS within 24 hours (for on post storage or other authorized use purposes). Personnel not registering purchased firearms on post will be instructed to directly remove the firearm from post.
- Senior Commanders (SC) are responsible for establishing procedures and punitive policies that regulate Personally owned Weapons (POWs) on Army installations. These policies will provide procedures for the registration of firearms belonging to personnel living on the installation and registration of firearms by personnel who bring a firearm onto the installation for the purpose of engaging in authorized activities such as hunting, dog training activities, or marksmanship events.

#### Arms Room:

The process for storing personal weapons in the Arms Room vary by state and installation, but generally, Unit Commanders will establish local-level policy and procedures for storing firearms in unit arms rooms. Per [FR Reg 190-1](#)<sup>24</sup> (2018), Unit Commanders will:

- Account for and inventory privately owned firearms and ammunition secured in unit arms.
- Ensure that a [DA Form 3749](#) has been issued for each privately owned firearm secured in the arms room. Privately owned firearms will be inventoried in conjunction with and at the frequency of the inventory of military weapons.
- Establish limits on the quantity and type of privately owned ammunition stored in the arms room, based upon availability of space and safety considerations.
- Post applicable local regulations and state and local law information on ownership, registration, and possession of firearms and ammunition on unit bulletin boards.
- Brief all newly assigned persons on this regulation and subordinate command guidance. All personnel will be made aware of changes.



## OFF-POST<sup>15</sup> STORAGE LOCATIONS BY STATE

### Law Enforcement

Some law enforcement departments will take firearms and offer temporary storage, permanent disposal options, or both. This process is generally described below along with common Q&As:

Call your local police department, sheriff, or state police and

- Identify yourself and explain your concern.
- Ask for the Officer on Duty; write down his/her name and the department's name.
- Arrange a time and location for the officer to pick up the firearms if they offer that service.
- Do not bring the firearms to the police department unless told to by the Officer on Duty.

Ask how the firearms need to be prepared to store with the Department:

- Unload the weapon. If you do not know how to unload the firearm(s), tell the officer before their arrival.
- If the officer asks you to bring the firearms to the police station, identify who will bring them (name, physical description) and when the person will arrive.

What Happens to the Firearms? This is dependent on the department, but personnel can expect that:

- The gun owner and officer will complete some paperwork.
- In most cases, the gun owner will need to go through a background check to get their firearm back.
- Departments that offer temporary storage may have different policies regarding how to retrieve it (e.g., if applicable in your state, the gun owner may need to bring in a valid firearm owner ID card).

### Self-storage facilities:

Some self-storage facilities offer storage (e.g., units, drawers) for personal firearms. They can be cost-effective options for individuals interested in storing multiple guns. Things to consider:

- Guns should be stored unloaded.
- Some facilities allow storage of ammunition, others don't.
- At 24-hour facilities you can typically retrieve your property at any time and without a background check.

### Gun shops and shooting ranges:

Some shops and ranges offer storage as a commercial service (for a fee), others as a courtesy to customers, and others do not offer storage. If they do, shops and ranges can offer 2 types of storage:

- Keyed Access: Typically, there is no background check required to retrieve the guns for lockers that you keep a key for.
- Vault Storage: If access is controlled by the gun shop (the gun owner doesn't have access to the vault or locker), the guns will most likely be logged by the shop. In these cases, the gun owner will usually need to complete a background check to retrieve the guns.

### Storing with friends or family:

Storing firearms with someone you trust is a comfortable and cost-free option for many people. Rules for temporary transfers differ by state. You can look up state laws that may limit temporary transfers.





### Reputable pawn shops

Some pawn shops will take guns in exchange for a “loan” and charge a monthly interest fee (e.g., on a loan of \$100 at 20%, the interest owed every month will be \$20). To retrieve the guns, you will likely need to repay the loan, pay all interest due, pass a background check, and fill out federal firearm paperwork.

## SECURE STORAGE LOCATIONS BY STATE<sup>9</sup>

Public health researchers have started to map off-post storage options for service members in their states. A current list of state maps is included below (as of 2022):

- [Gun Storage Map – Colorado Firearm Safety Coalition](#)
- [Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence – Maryland Secure Storage Map](#)
- [Mississippi Gun Storage Map](#)
- [New Jersey Firearm Storage Map | New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center](#)
- [New York Firearm Storage Map | Rockefeller Institute of Government](#)
- [Washington Firearm Secure Storage Map - Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center.](#)

### How-To Guide: Secure Storage Maps

As you identify off-post options in your area, we encourage local-level prevention personnel to develop maps for their state/community to reference and resource over time. Public health researchers at the [Injury & Violence Prevention Center](#)<sup>9</sup> at the University of Colorado have a Toolkit and instructional webinar on developing a firearm storage map for your state:

- Toolkit: [Voluntary Out-of-Home Firearm Storage: A Toolkit for creating maps](#)<sup>9</sup>
- Webinar: [Promoting Voluntary, Temporary Firearm Storage and Development of Firearm Storage Maps](#), featuring Dr. Emmy Betz, Leslie Barnard MPH, and Dr. Ali Rowhani Rahbar.<sup>9</sup>

If you develop a Secure Storage Map for your state, links to maps can be shared in the [LMS Catalogue & Community of Practice](#).



## V. What's Next: Actions & Resources by Role

Each member of the community can play an important role in encouraging and practicing secure storage of lethal means. The push for securely storing means is not only to reduce the risk for intentional self-harm and suicide, but also to reduce the risk for accidental injury or death of servicemembers, their friends, and family. Safety is everyone's concern and priority. Some ways to initially practice LMS in your role and day to day life include:

### To the extent that your role can action and advocate for...



**Support training and education in LMS across the enterprise, including spouses and children.**



**Develop and foster community partnerships to resource secure storage devices.**



**Distribute secure storage devices to service members and their Families.**



**Track the distribution of secure storage devices to encourage internal funding for devices.**



**Challenge common misconceptions, stigma, and other barriers to discussing and practicing LMS. Normalize secure storage behaviors via discussion and demonstration.**



**Discuss how LMS is for general violence and accident prevention, not just suicide prevention.**



**Discuss internal versus external threats and the reasons that Soldiers/ Family Member(s) do not practice secure storage and suggest additional/ alternative methods to create a safe environment.**



## Resources for All:

- [Ask, Care, Escort \(ACE\), ACE-Suicide Intervention \(ACE-SI\)](#)  
*The Army ACE Suicide Intervention (ACE-SI) Program is a three-hour training that provides soldiers with the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to intervene with those at risk for suicide. ACE stands for Ask, Care, and Escort. The purpose of ACE is to help soldiers and junior leaders become more aware of steps they can take to prevent suicides and confident in their ability to do so.*
- **Center for Deployment Psychology's [Lethal Means Safety Counseling to Reduce Suicide Risk](#)**  
*Reducing access to suicide methods that are highly lethal and commonly used is a proven strategy for decreasing suicide rates. While some suicidal crises last a long time, most last minutes to hours. Limiting access to lethal means during periods of crisis can make it more likely that the person will delay or survive a suicide attempt. This course will explain the importance of safely storing lethal means, how to discuss storage options and safety planning with a Veteran in crisis, and tangible options to facilitate lethal means safety such as firearm locking devices, medication disposal kits, and VA resources for both Veterans and their clinicians.*
- **Firearm Basics [Video](#)**  
*This simple but comprehensive tool can help everyone understand the different parts of a firearm and lead to more productive conversations about gun violence prevention.*

## Resources by Role:

We encourage reviewing materials in each section as many resources are appropriate for more than one group:

### Leaders

- DPRR's [LMS Checklist for Commanders](#)  
*Ways to practice LMS as a leader.*
- DPRR's [LMS Tiplist for Commanders](#)  
*Tips for practicing LMS as a Commander.*
- DPRR's [Call to Action Suicide Prevention](#)  
*Reducing Suicide in Army Formations BDE and BN Commander's Handbook.*
- DPRR's [Leader SI Drill Card](#)  
*Steps for prevention, intervention, and postvention when a Leader identifies someone who is having thoughts of suicide. Leadership in times of crisis is an opportunity to reinforce and build trust, confidence, and unit cohesion. Being supported in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event is important in the healing and recovery process. The positive outcomes of this response can contribute to an overall more cohesive, engaged, and productive unit climate.*
- DPRR's [Senior Commander's Guide to Suicide Prevention](#)  
*Reducing suicide in Army Formations.*
- DSPO's [Leaders Suicide Safe Messaging Guide](#)  
*The purpose of the Leaders Safe Messaging Guide is to better equip leaders with the tools and resources necessary to communicate about suicide safely and effectively with Service members, units, and military communities.*
- DSPO's [LMS Guide for Military Service Members and Their Families](#)  
*This guide will help you understand one of the contributing factors to suicide – access to lethal means – and will share information and strategies to help*
- DSPO's [Prevention of Suicide by Firearm: A Communication Guide for Military Leaders and Support Providers](#)  
*In this guide, you will learn to communicate strategically with Service members about the importance of personally owned firearm safety as a means of suicide prevention. This guide will provide you with the tools, information, and*



strategies to tailor your messages based on someone's background, life circumstances, and Service branch or rank. Lastly, you will learn about what motivates different groups of people in the military when it comes to secure storage of their personally owned firearms.

- National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention's [Lethal Means & Suicide Prevention: A Guide for Community and Industry Leaders](#)

*This report provides an overview of the role lethal means play in suicide, and highlights actions being taken by governments, organizations, and industries that have resulted in lives being saved. The report serves to equip community and industry leaders with the background, knowledge, and guidance they need to help play a role in reducing access to lethal means among those who may be at risk for suicide.*

- Psychological Health Center of Excellence's (PHCOE) [Reducing Access to Firearms: A Suicide Prevention Guide for Military Leaders](#)

*A guide for military leaders that describes what LMS is, recommendations to manage servicemember risk, best practices for reducing access to personally owned firearms, and relevant resources.*

### Care Providers: Clinical, Non-Clinical, and Support Personnel (Chaplains, MFLCs)

- Discuss LMS Resources and Tools with clients:
  - Request gunlocks from your local VA Suicide Prevention Coordinator (SPC, [VA Resource Locator](#)) to distribute to clients.
  - Include LMS in [Safety Plans](#) or [Crisis Response Plans](#), even when an individual is not actively in crisis.
- [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#)
  - » *Action Alliance is the nation's public-private partnership for suicide prevention, working with more than 250 national partners to advance the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention<sup>23</sup>.*
  - » [Faith Hope Life Campaign](#)  
Aims to involve all faith communities in suicide prevention.
  - » [Suicide Prevention Competencies for Faith Leaders: Supporting Life Before, During, and After a Suicidal Crisis](#)  
*This resource, informed by faith community leaders and suicide prevention experts, aims to help equip faith leaders with the capabilities needed to prevent suicide and provide care and comfort for those affected by suicide.*
- Harvard's Means Matter [Clinician Recommendations](#)  
*Recommendations for clinicians on how to engage in Lethal Means Counseling and leverage support networks in reducing access to lethal means.*
- [Lock 2 Live](#)  
*A firearm storage decision aid to enhance lethal means counselling and prevent suicide*
- PHCOE's [Lethal Means Counseling: Recommendations for Providers](#)  
*Describes LMS, routine secure storage options, details a collaborative approach for addressing lethal means safety with clients, describes what a military provider can ask their client related to LMS, and recommendations to temporarily reduce access to firearms.*
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center's (SPRC) [LMS Comprehensive Approach \(one pager\)](#)  
*Tips for reducing access to lethal means to reduce risk of self-harm or death by suicide. Firearms are the most lethal among suicide methods. Also of concern are medications that are lethal at high doses.*
- [VA REACH](#)  
*Don't wait. Reach out. Ways to practice LMS and identify individuals at risk.*
- Build Capacity through LMS Counseling Trainings for Care Providers (\* = free)
  - » American Medical Association: [The Physician's Role in Promoting Firearm Safety](#)\*



- » Center for Deployment Psychology: [Lethal Means Safety Counseling to Reduce Suicide Risk\\*](#)
- » Massachusetts Medical Society: [Initiating a Conversation with Patients on Gun Safety](#)
- » National Center for Veterans Studies: [Firearm Safety Counseling\\*](#)
- » SPRC: Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM)\*
- » UC Davis, What You Can Do Initiative: [Preventing Firearm-Related Injury and Death: A Targeted Intervention\\*](#)
- » University of Michigan: [Approach to Firearm Safety Counseling\\*](#)
- » University of Michigan: [Firearm Injury Prevention\\*](#)

### Prevention Workforce (SPPCs, RRPC)

- [Afterdeployment.Org](#)  
*Offers a wellness resource for the military community providing self-care solutions targeting behavioral health challenges commonly faced after a deployment. The resources and exercise on afterdeployment.org challenges, including post-traumatic stress and triggers, conflict at work, reconnecting with family and friends, depression, anger, stress management, kids and deployment, spiritual guidance, living with physical injuries, health and wellness, and much more.*
- [Community Resource Guide](#)  
*Community Resource Guides list programs and services available to members of US military communities including military service members, their family members, DoD civilian personnel and retirees. Each guide is designed so you can quickly scan its contents for resources that fit your needs. You can then expand individual resources for additional information including websites, email addresses, and phone numbers you can use to contact each resource's provider.*
- [DoD Caregiver Resource Directory](#)  
*Provides information about national and local resources and programs specifically designed to help empower military caregivers. Topics in the Caregiver Resource Directory include helplines, advocacy and benefit information, career transitions and employment, military caregiver support, children's needs, education and training, financial support, rest and relaxation, and others.*
- DSPO's [LMS Guide for Military Service Members and Their Families](#)  
*This guide will help you understand one of the contributing factors to suicide – access to lethal means – and will share information and strategies to help.*
- DSPO's [Suicide Prevention: In Collaboration with Firearm Retailers](#)  
*Suicide Prevention Coordinators and other stakeholders can use this Toolkit to establish collaborative relationships with firearm retailers, including staff in private retail stores and at military exchanges, on and off installation.*
- [VA Caregiver Support Program](#)  
*Offer caregiver resources and caregiver support programs to include peer support mentoring, tips and tools, self-care activities, and more. Caregiver Support Coordinators are available at each VA Medical Center to help caregivers find the right support to meet their needs and to enroll in caregiver programs and services.*

### Family Members & Peers

By securing our homes and limiting access to lethal means, we can protect our Families and prevent the unnecessary loss of life or injury. The following tips can help you create a safer home for your loved ones, as well as identify and address possible warning signs.

- AFSP's [When Someone Is At Risk](#)  
*Recommendations for what to do when you have identified someone at-risk for suicide*
- DPRR's [Family Member SI Drill Card](#)  
*Steps for prevention, intervention, and postvention when a family member identifies someone who is having thoughts*



of suicide. Space to fill in local contacts and resources to use in crisis. You can help prevent suicide or suicide attempts by actively intervening when your spouse or partner expresses suicidal ideation. Be alert and engaged before they are overwhelmed by life stressors and risk factors. Suicidal ideation, or suicidal thoughts, means thinking about planning suicide. Thoughts can range from a quick consideration to a detailed plan.

- DPRR's [LMS Checklist for Families](#)  
*Ways to practice LMS at home.*
- DPRR's [LMS Tiplist for Families](#)  
*Tips for practicing LMS with your family.*
- DPRR's [Soldier SI Drill Card](#)  
*Steps for prevention, intervention, and postvention when a Soldier identifies someone who is having thoughts of suicide. Space to fill in local contacts and resources to use in crisis. The goal in responding to a Soldier's expression of suicidal ideation is to prevent a suicide attempt by actively engaging and intervening before they are overwhelmed by life stressors and risk factors. Suicidal ideation, or suicidal thoughts, means thinking about planning suicide. Thoughts can range from a quick consideration to a detailed plan. If you see someone in crisis, use the information below to intervene.*
- The [Comfort Crew](#)  
*Helps kids through the unique situations they experience as a military kid such as dealing with deployment, handling loss, and being a kid of an injured hero. The Comfort Crew for Military Kids delivers resources to help military kids and their family connect and build resiliency in the face of extraordinary challenges.*
- DSPO's [LMS Guide for Military Service Members and Their Families](#)  
*This guide will help you understand one of the contributing factors to suicide – access to lethal means – and will share information and strategies to help.*
- Harvard's Means Matter [Recommendation for Families](#)  
*If you're concerned that a member of your household may be suicidal, there are steps you can take to help keep them safe.*
- [Operation Family Caregiver](#)  
*Provides free and confidential support to the Families of returning service members and veterans through a nationwide personalized program of coaches that teach caregivers how best to navigate their challenges. Operation Family Caregiver is a program of the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving.*

## Guard & Reserve Resources

In addition to the resources listed in the sections above, National Guard and Reserve-specific resources are included below:

- [USAR Resources for Stressors and Useful Hotlines](#)  
*Worksheet with resources and links to manage stress and reduce harmful behaviors and various prevention and intervention crisis and non-crisis hotlines.*
- [Project Safeguard](#)  
*Training model for the National Guard on lethal means and voluntary reductions in firearm access during at-risk periods. The peer-to-peer counseling incorporates principles of motivational interviewing to encourage secure storage of personal firearms to decrease the risk of death.*



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## APPENDIX 2. Crisis & Non-Crisis Lines & Resources

HQDA, DCS G-1 supports and encourages the dissemination of suicide prevention crisis and noncrisis via leaders and prevention professionals. Crisis and Non-Crisis voice, text, and chat lines are listed below (please note the hours of operation and country of service):

### **Crisis Lines**

The [Veterans and Military Crisis Line](#) connects service members and veterans in crisis, as well as their family members and friends, with qualified department of veteran's affairs (VA) responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text messaging service. In the U.S., individuals can call 988 or 1-800-273-8255 (Press 1), or text: 838255. In Europe call 0080-1273-8255 OR DSN 118. In Korea call 0808-555-118 OR DSN 118. In Afghanistan call 00-1-800-273-8255 or DSN 111. The link to the chat line is: [www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat).

The [Trevor Project](#) is the world's largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) people. The 24/7 hotline is 1-866-488-7386 and text line can be reached by texting 'START' to 678-678.

The domestic [LGBT National Hotline](#) provides free and confidential telephone, online chat, and email peer-support. To reach the hotline, call: 888-843-4563 M-F: 1600-2400 (EST) or 1300 to 2100 (PT) and Sat: 1200-1700 (EST) or 0900-1400 (PT). Soldiers and family members can also email: [help@lgbthotline.org](mailto:help@lgbthotline.org).

[Trans Lifeline](#) offers peer support phone service run by trans people for trans and questioning individuals in the US (877-565-8860) and Canada (877-330-6366). Call them if you need someone trans to talk to, even if you're not in crisis or if you're not sure you are trans. US: 877-565-8860.

### **Non-Crisis Lines**

[Military OneSource](#) is for non-crisis concerns, such as relationship, family, or financial challenges. Military OneSource provides 24/7 service to all service members, including national guard and reserve members and eligible family members. Individuals can call 800-342-9647 or chat online at [www.livechat.military-onesourceconnect.org/chat](http://www.livechat.military-onesourceconnect.org/chat) to arrange a face-to-face, phone, online, or video counseling session.

[inTransition](#) is a free, confidential program that offers specialized coaching and assistance for active-duty service members, national guard members, and reservists who need access to a new mental health provider or wish to initiate mental health care for the first time. inTransition services are available to all military members regardless of length of service or discharge status and can be accessed at: 800-424-7877 (US), 800-424-4685 (international toll-free number), and 314-387-4700 (collect).

The [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) (AFSP) offers many prevention materials and resources.

The [Defense Suicide Prevention Office](#) (DSPO) has policies, tools, and materials for leaders, prevention personnel, and the Army community.



# APPENDIX 3. Program Monitoring & Evaluation Resources

## Evaluation Resources

### Logic Models and Performance Measurement Indicators

- Logic models for LMS And suicide prevention functions can guide evaluation planning. Performance Management Indicators (PMIs) are essentially outputs of LMS and prevention efforts that serve as evidence of delivery. Logic Models are a planning and evaluation tool that can be used to map goals and objectives. Logic Models clearly define process and outcome indicators and explain how change will occur over time. Logic Models include Inputs, Activities, Outputs, and Outcomes (short-term, intermediate, and long-term). An example logic model is described below regarding the distribution of LMS materials:

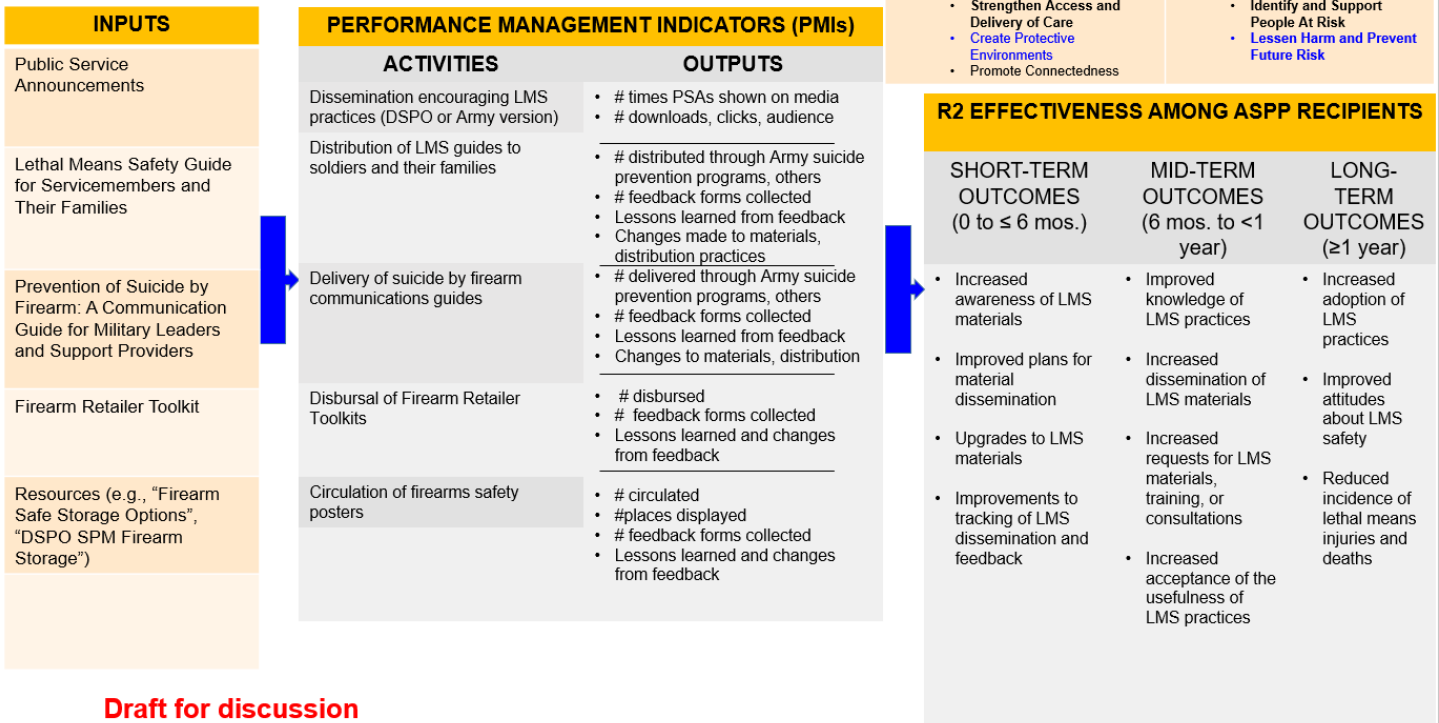
### Distribution of LMS Materials

**Purpose:**

- Supports DoD Strategy for Suicide Prevention Goal #6 *Promote Efforts within DOD to reduce access to lethal means of suicide among individuals with identified suicide risk*, and Goal #5 *Develop, Implement, and Monitor Programs that promote resilience and prevent suicide and suicide related behaviors.*
- LMS materials include those accessible on DSPO's Lethal Means Safety Suite of Tools, **as well as service-produced materials designed to accomplish similar ends.**
  - Public Service Announcements (PSAs) such as "In Our Nature"
  - Lethal Means Safety Guide for Servicemembers and Their Families
  - Prevention of Suicide by Firearm: A Communication Guide for Military Leaders and Support Providers
  - Firearm Retailer Toolkit
  - Resources (e.g., "Firearm Safe Storage Options", "DSPO SPM Firearm Storage")

Draft for discussion

### Logic Model: DSPO's Suite of Lethal Means Safety Tools (and Army tools designed for similar ends)



Draft for discussion



## Logic Model Assumptions

### Public Service Announcement Assumptions

Increasing the visibility of LMS Safety Materials will increase awareness of safety alternatives and increase long-run adoption of LMS adoption.

Collection of number of times PSAs were shown and estimated audience size will provide evidence of the penetration of these LMS messages.

Surveys and focus groups with servicemembers will determine the effectiveness of these messages.

### Lethal Means Safety Guide Assumptions

Distribution of lethal means safety guides for servicemembers, their families, and to commanders, will result in increased acceptance of LMS safety and better command messaging regarding LMS practices.

Collection of information about distribution of LMS safety guides will provide information on the penetration of these guides.

Collection of focus group and survey data with commanders and servicemembers will determine how convincing and effective the guides were in increasing openness to LMS practices.

### Firearm Retailer Toolkit Assumptions

Many servicemembers who own firearms trust information provided them at firearms retail stores and will pay attention to LMS materials distributed there.

A survey of firearms retailers will determine whether messages displayed or provided at their stores were well-received by customers.

Servicemembers seeing LMS materials in firearms retailers will be encouraged to purchase and use LMS tools such as firearms safes and locks.

**Draft for discussion**

4

## SMART Objectives Template (CDC)

- When it comes time to define the goals and objectives of your prevention program, this template will walk you through the process of developing *specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based objectives*. Once you have considered the goals of your program, it is time to think about objectives and activities needed to accomplish these goals. Some templates to do so are included below:

Template 1 ([CDC](#)):

SMART objective:	
Key Component	Objective
Specific - What is the specific task?	
Measurable - What are the standards or parameters?	
Achievable - Is the task feasible?	
Realistic - Are sufficient resources available?	
Time-Bound - What are the start and end dates?	



**Template 2 (DoD SPARX):**

Program	Goal	SMART Objective	Action Steps
Coaching Boys into Men	Decrease gender biases	1. 20% of soldiers will complete CBIM training by 1 December.	1. Hire training facilitator by February.
			2. Recruit soldiers to complete training in spring.
			3. Deliver training June through December.
		2. 65% of soldiers will engage in at least one proactive prevention behavior within 3 months of completing CBIM, as measured by 3-month follow-up survey.	1. Identify surveys.
			2. Have soldiers complete baseline information in January.
			3. Give follow-up surveys in March.
		1.	1.
			2.
			3.
		2.	1.
			2.
			3.



## APPENDIX 4. LMS Catalogue & Community of Practice

To share materials and best-practices for socializing suicide prevention and LMS resources, DPRR encourages the utilization of the [LMS Catalogue & Community of Practice](#). DPRR has also uploaded additional resources and links to external LMS and prevention materials in the [LMS Catalogue](#). Prevention personnel are encouraged to upload materials and resources that they find helpful to expand awareness and dissemination of existing materials.



## APPENDIX 5. Glossary & Acronym Definitions

These definitions are intended to describe terms used in this Toolkit and are not meant to be used for reporting purposes. Please reference applicable policies and instructions for reporting definitions.

- **Accidental Harm:** Injury or death as a result of unintentional action toward oneself or others.
- **Firearm Leadership:** Involves knowledge and proficiency in firearm handling and safety at work and in the home, to include knowledge of threats and actions taken to reduce the risk of intentional (self-directed) and accidental firearm injury and death. This might include secure storage, routine training and operations, risk identification and mitigation, and the normalization of lethal means safety conversations and behaviors.
- **Lethal Mean:** An instrument or object (firearms, medicine, rope) used to carry out a self-destructive act.
- **Lethal Means Safety:** Intentional and voluntary practices that increase time and space between an individual and a lethal mean to reduce the risk of intentional harm (suicide, domestic violence) and accidental harm (injury or death).
- **Intentional Harm:** Injury or death as a result of purposeful action toward oneself (suicide) or others (domestic violence).

### Acronyms

- ACE-SI = Ask, Care, Escort – Suicide Intervention
- AFSP = American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- AR = Army Regulation
- CDC = Centers for Disease Control
- DoD = Department of Defense
- DoDI = Department of Defense Instruction
- DPRR = Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness
- DSPO = Defense Suicide Prevention Office
- LMS = Lethal Means Safety
- SPC = Suicide Prevention Coordinator, US Department of Veteran Affairs
- SPPC = Suicide Prevention Program Coordinator, US Army
- SPPM = Suicide Prevention Program Manager, US Army
- VA = US Department of Veteran Affairs
- USAR = United States Army Reserve