



FACT SHEET:

Domestic Violence and Firearms

The presence of a firearm in a domestic violence situation greatly increases the likelihood of homicide for victims and bystanders. In 2017, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed the *Protect RI Families Act*, which requires abusers convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors or subject to restraining orders to surrender their firearms.¹

- Between 2006 and 2015, **54 people** lost their lives to domestic violence homicides in Rhode Island. Though a similar number of homicide incidents involved stabbing as those that involved firearms, considerably more victims were **killed with firearms (19 victims, or 42%)** than by stabbing (14 victims, or 31%).²
- Rhode Island domestic violence police incident reports for the year 2015 show that **452 suspects were in possession of a firearm at the time of their arrest.**³
- When a firearm is present in a domestic violence situation, **the risk of homicide for women is five times greater** than when a firearm is not present.⁴
- Women in the U.S. are **11 times more likely to be killed with a firearm** than women in other developed countries.⁵
- **Abusers having access to firearms is also dangerous for bystanders.** Mass shootings are defined as incidents in which four or more people are killed (not including the shooter). An analysis of gun violence crimes from 2009-2016 found that **54% of mass shootings were related to domestic or family violence.**⁶
 - 25% of the mass shooting fatalities were children. In mass shootings related to domestic or family violence, **over 40% of the fatalities were children.**⁷
 - In nearly half (42%) of the mass shootings, **the shooter exhibited warning signs before the shooting** indicating that they posed a danger to themselves or others. These red flags included acts, attempted acts, or threats of violence towards oneself or others; violations of protective orders; or evidence of ongoing substance abuse.⁸

1. R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-47-5(a-b), 8-8.1-3(a)(4), (c).

2. *Domestic Violence Homicides in Rhode Island, 2006-2015*. RICADV. February 2016.

3. Rhode Island Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit. 2015.

4. Campbell, J. C., Webster, D., et al. (2003). Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: Results from a multisite case control study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(7), 1089-1097.

5. Hemenway, D. and Richardson, E.G. (2011). Homicide, suicide, and unintentional firearm fatality: Comparing the United States with other high-income countries, 2003. *Journal of Trauma*, 70, 238-42.

6. Everytown for Gun Safety. (2017). Mass shootings in the United States: 2009-2016. *Everytown Research*. Retrieved from https://everytownresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Analysis_of_Mass_Shooting_033117.pdf.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.