



California's Gun Violence Restraining Order:

PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS CAN SPEAK FOR SAFETY

"My department leads efforts to reduce gun violence in our community, which is mostly rural with many households owning guns. Our rate of firearm-related deaths and suicides is higher than most other counties. I've heard about the GVRO but I'd like to know more about how it would help our population."

"An Alzheimer's support coalition in our community wants to know what laws can help them protect families and Alzheimer's patients from harming themselves or others with guns in a crisis situation."

A NEW LAW CAN HELP!

California's Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) gives law enforcement officers and family members a way to prevent gun violence through an expedient and civil process. If there is a strong likelihood that someone is at risk of harming themselves or others, a family or household member* or law enforcement** may petition the local Superior Court clerk for a GVRO that can last from 21 days up to one year. Only when the order expires or is terminated by a judge or petitioner may firearms and ammunition be returned to the restrained person.

**Includes spouses, parents, grandparents, siblings, children, stepparents, stepchildren, domestic partners, or roommates and other household members who have lived with the subject of the petition within the last six months.*

***Includes sheriff's departments, police departments, and other law enforcement agencies.*

WHY IS A GVRO AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR PUBLIC HEALTH?

Educating community members and families about the GVRO can help reduce the potential for danger when a gun is present in the home of someone who is at risk of harming themselves or others. GVROs empower the people who are traditionally aware that a loved one is dangerous or in crisis to remove his or her access to guns and prevent a tragedy. The GVRO law gives standing to the individuals who are most likely to notice the warning signs of dangerousness, family or household members and law enforcement officers, and allows them to disarm a loved one or individual who poses a threat to the health and safety of themselves or others. A GVRO works as a prevention measure, making it an important tool in the effort to combat the epidemic of gun violence in the United States.

A CIVIL ACTION

The GVRO is a civil procedure, not a criminal one. The goal is to ensure safety and allow the subject of the GVRO the opportunity to heal or stabilize. However, if the order is violated, the subject may be charged with a misdemeanor crime. Only when the order expires or is terminated may firearms and ammunition be returned to the restrained person.

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR COMMUNITY LEARN ABOUT GVROS?

Helping to spread the word about the GVRO as a gun violence prevention tool to law enforcement agencies, community organizations, government officials and workers, and other community partners can allow community members to make use of this life-saving tool. Examples of organizations that could be key partners in raising the awareness of GVROs include:

- First responders and 911 dispatchers
- Substance use centers
- Law enforcement
- Churches and faith-based organizations
- Local policy makers and judicial officers
- Veterans' care, and health organizations
- Emergency department and other medical staff
- Eldercare and home visiting organizations

Raising awareness by sharing materials and resources on the GVRO online or in person, directing community members to www.speakforsafety.org, hosting local meetings or forums in partnership with other organizations like law enforcement, and other tactics can help spread the word about the GVRO and empower people to share the information themselves. Talking directly to local policy makers, law enforcement, and court staff about the GVRO as a tool to prevent gun violence is also an important means of getting this information into the hands of the people who need it the most.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT CALIFORNIA'S GVRO

- If you think someone poses an immediate danger to themselves or others you can contact law enforcement directly. They can file a temporary emergency GVRO at any time if necessary, even if the court is closed.
- If a yearlong order is obtained, before it expires, a family member, household member, or law enforcement officer may petition for the renewal of a GVRO with the court if the subject of the GVRO is still a risk to themselves or others.
- If someone is being threatened directly by a spouse, partner, or someone in their family or household, they may petition for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO). See Form DV-500-INFO² for more information.
- The California Judicial Council and court system refers to GVROs as "Firearms Restraining Orders" or FROs. FROs and GVROs are the same.

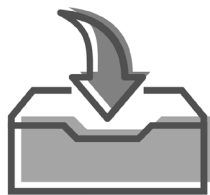
DID YOU KNOW?

- More than half of all gun deaths in California are suicides. (Source: CDC WONDER.)
- A recent study examined the results of a similar law in Connecticut and estimated that for every 10 to 20 orders removing firearms issued, at least one suicide was prevented.
- In a poll by Aging Life Care Association, over one-third of professionals surveyed said they either frequently or sometimes found guns in their elder clients' homes, and several respondents recounted stories of suicides by clients that took place while professional caregivers were in the home.

HOW CAN I SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THE GVRO TO SPEAK FOR SAFETY?



Contact your local Superior Court office and ask if they have heard of the GVRO.



Download our resources SpeakForSafety.org.



Help create a policy or procedural document for your police or sheriff's department.

¹ <http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/gv100.pdf>

² <http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/dv500info.pdf>

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