



**FORGED
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CULTURE OF
EXCELLENCE 2.0**

SUICIDE PREVENTION

REDUCING ACCESS TO LETHAL MEANS

Periods of increased stress heighten the risk of suicide. Lethal means safety is the process of ensuring that highly lethal means of suicide are not as easily accessible during these times.

The Navy released guidance for Commanding Officers (CO) and health professionals on reducing access to highly lethal methods of suicide through voluntary storage of privately-owned firearms. This is part of a broader Department of Defense (DOD) strategy to prevent military suicides. Here are **five key points** all Sailors should know about the guidance:



5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- 1 | Why was the guidance developed?** A five year analysis showed that firearms continue to be the method used in over half of all Navy suicide deaths in Calendar Years (CY) 2018-2022. Research indicates that suicides can be prevented when a highly lethal method isn't readily available. These voluntary measures are intended to save Sailors' lives by helping them avoid taking irreversible actions, providing the opportunity for intervention and care.
- 2 | What does the guidance do?** Commanders and health professionals may ask Sailors, who are believed to be at risk for suicide or causing harm to others, to voluntarily allow their privately-owned firearms to be stored for safekeeping by the command. It also establishes procedures to protect the rights of Sailors who consent to storage. The guidance applies to all Sailors (both active and reserve) and is in accordance with DoDI 6400.09
- 3 | What does it mean to "voluntarily surrender my privately-owned firearm"?** If a Sailor agrees to temporarily surrender his or her weapon for safekeeping, the commanding officer will ensure that it is securely stored on the installation or other available location in coordination with local authorities. It will be returned at a later time upon the Sailor's request or at the end of the predetermined storage period set between the CO and the Sailor.
- 4 | Can a CO or health professional take my privately-owned firearm without my consent?** No. While COs and health professionals are authorized to inquire about a Sailor's privately-owned firearms if they believe the Sailor is at risk, surrendering the firearm is entirely voluntary. Incentives and disincentives shall not be offered to coerce the Sailor and influence his or her decision.
- 5 | What are common warning signs that may indicate a Sailor is "at risk for suicide"?** Signs may include expressing thoughts of hurting oneself or others, developing plans to take lethal action, giving away possessions, social withdrawal, expressing feelings of hopelessness or despair, uncharacteristic substance abuse or violence.

VETERANS CRISIS LINE FOR ALL MILITARY ****24/7, Confidential Crisis Support****

SEEKING HELP IS A SIGN OF STRENGTH. If you or someone you know is considering suicide, call the Military Crisis Line:

CALLING FROM CONUS
Call 988 then Press 1

Chat with a Crisis Line responder by text 838255
or through [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/Chat)

CALLING FROM OCONUS

Europe:
Call +1 844-702-5495 (off base) or DSN 988 (on base)
Southwest Asia:
Call +1 855-422-7719 (off base) or DSN 988 (on base)
Pacific:
Call +1 844-702-5493 (off base) or DSN 988 (on base)

For more information, refer to [NAVADMIN 263/14](#) or visit Navy Suicide Prevention at www.suicide.navy.mil and [DoDI 6400.09](#) or visit the Defense Suicide Prevention Office at www.dspo.mil.



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