Help Make Your Neighborhood Safer Today

Federal and local law enforcement and prosecutors can help your community, but they can't do it without you. Do your part to make Project Safe Neighborhoods a reality where you live. As President Bush said in announcing this project, "For all our children's sake, this nation must reclaim our neighborhoods and our streets."

To learn more about Project Safe Neighborhoods, visit www.usdoj.gov.

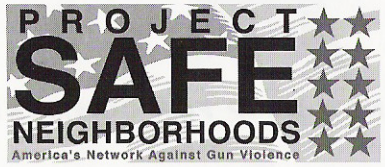
PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS
America's Network Against Gun Violence

PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS
America's Network Against Gun Violence

www.usdoj.gov

NEW HELP FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY!

PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS
America's Network Against Gun Violence



Project Safe Neighborhoods: America's Network Against Gun Violence is a new federal initiative to reduce gun violence announced in May by President George W. Bush and Attorney General John Ashcroft, who are seeking $558 million over two years to reduce gun violence in America. The initiative includes partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies; strategic planning incorporating such technologies as crime mapping, gun tracing, and ballistic analysis; training that brings together federal, state, and local officials to build effective teams; outreach to communities; and accountability for impact on community safety.

The nation's 93 U.S. Attorneys will take the lead in bringing Project Safe Neighborhoods to the states and communities they serve. They will spearhead enforcement task forces, work with local officials to identify the most effective laws to use against gun-carrying criminals, and help focus community attention and energy on reducing gun violence.

The project will also provide funds for state and local governments to employ additional prosecutors focused on enforcing gun laws; target gun traffickers, armed violent offenders, and those prohibited from buying guns; and improve record keeping.

Enforcement Is a Key

Enforcement helps reduce gun violence in several ways:

- It reinforces the message that the community will not tolerate gun violence.
- It removes serious violent offenders from the streets and out of our neighborhoods.
- Under federal law, felons, drug dealers, and other specified individuals can face ten to 15 years in prison for illegally possessing a gun or ammunition.
- It increases the risk faced by potential offenders.

Federal Laws — Some Examples

Federal laws provide a number of ways to prevent criminals from getting guns. People convicted of felonies risk a ten-year federal prison sentence if they possess or receive a firearm or ammunition. Those who are fugitives from justice face the same penalty, as do those convicted of domestic violence. Using or carrying a firearm during a federal crime of violence or a drug trafficking crime (federal or state) can result in a sentence ranging from five years' imprisonment to death (in addition to any sentence imposed for the crimes). Possessing or discharging a firearm in a school zone can yield a five-year federal sentence.

State Laws — Some Examples

State laws differ, but many states provide for additional sentencing if a firearm was used in commission of a crime, if an unauthorized person is in possession of a firearm, or if a firearm is illegally sold to a prohibited owner. Some states impose obligations on parents to store weapons securely against children's access; some states limit numbers of weapons that can be purchased in a given time period. States set their own minimum and maximum sentences for violations of these state laws.

What You Can Do as an Individual

- If you suspect someone is in possession of an illegal gun (for example, a stolen weapon), report it to your local or state police or the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF).
- If you suspect someone has a gun but is barred by law from having one (for example, someone who has been convicted of a crime), report it to those same authorities.
- Support your police and prosecutors.
- Store any weapons in your home securely, separating ammunition from weapons. Keep weapons secure against theft. More than 300,000 guns are stolen in home burglaries annually.

What You Can Do in Your Community

Support programs that help people steer a new, law-abiding course. For example,

- participate in partnerships that bring police and parole officers together to enforce terms of parolees' release or of probation
- encourage young people to get involved in teen and youth courts in which peers help decide what should happen to youth who have broken the law
- participate in Neighborhood Watch initiatives that involve residents in reporting suspicious behavior and working to improve their neighborhoods
- support programs focused on children and young people, such as youth-serving facilities like teen centers and Boys & Girls Clubs, classes to help parents improve their skills, and mentoring programs
- harness the energies of the faith community, schools, hospitals and clinics, businesses, community centers, youth-serving organizations, and youth membership groups to help.