



**PA 19-5—sHB 7218**

*Judiciary Committee*

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME AND FIREARM SAFETY PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**SUMMARY:** This act expands the firearm safe storage laws. Under prior law, the legal duty to securely store a loaded firearm applied when the person in control of the premises knows or reasonably should know that a minor under age 16 is likely to gain access to it without his or her parent's or guardian's permission. The act extends this storage requirement to also include unloaded firearms and increases the age threshold for these purposes to minors under age 18. As under existing law:

1. the safe storage requirements also apply if a resident of the home is either ineligible to possess a firearm under state or federal law or poses a risk of personal harm or harm to others and
2. a person who fails to securely store a firearm is strictly liable for damages, regardless of intent.

By law, criminally negligent storage of a firearm is a class D felony (see [Table on Penalties](#)).

The act specifies that the safe storage law applies to sawed-off shotguns, machine guns, rifles, shotguns, pistols, revolvers, or other weapons, whether loaded or unloaded, from which a shot may be discharged.

It also makes changes in the laws related to firearm safety programs for school children, including extending the grade level through which schools may offer such programs to grade 12 instead of grade eight.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** October 1, 2019, except the provisions on the school firearm safety programs are effective July 1, 2019.

**SAFE STORAGE OF A FIREARM**

Under the act, a person complies with the safe storage requirements if he or she keeps the firearm in a securely locked box or other container or in a manner that a reasonable person would believe to be secure. Under prior law, a person could comply with the requirements by keeping the firearm in such a box or container in a location that a reasonable person would believe to be secure.

As under existing law, a person may also comply with the requirements by carrying the firearm on his or her person or within such close proximity that he or she can readily retrieve and use the firearm as if he or she carried it on his or her person.

By law, unchanged by the act, a person is not guilty of criminally negligent firearm storage if the minor obtains the firearm as a result of an unlawful entry to any premises by anyone.

SCHOOL FIREARM SAFETY PROGRAMS

Under the act, the State Board of Education (SBE):

1. must, within available appropriations, develop guides to help local and regional boards of education develop firearm safety programs for public students in kindergarten through grade 12 and
2. may consult with the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association in developing the guides.

Prior law allowed SBE and the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association to develop curriculum guides for this purpose for kindergarten through grade eight in public schools. By law, SBE must make such guides available to local and regional boards of education.

The act also allows local or regional boards of education to offer firearm safety programs to K-12 public school students. Prior law allowed the boards to offer such programs to public school students in kindergarten through grade eight. The law prohibits local or regional boards of education from requiring students to participate in a firearm safety program.