

# 2 in 10 Kentucky adults have loaded, unlocked firearms in or around home

In 2017, more than 700 firearm-related deaths occurred in Kentucky; these included suicides, homicides and unintentional injuries.<sup>1</sup> This is a rate of 16.2 deaths per 100,000 Kentuckians, the 16th highest in the nation (see Footnote 1). The 2019 **Kentucky Health Issues Poll** asked Kentucky adults several questions about firearms and their storage. KHIP is sponsored by Interact for Health and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky.

## More than half of Kentucky adults have firearms around home

KHIP asked, "Are any firearms kept in or around your home?"<sup>2</sup> More than half of Kentucky adults (55%) reported keeping firearms in or around their home. This has increased since KHIP first asked this question in 2011 (45%), but not since the question was last asked in 2016 (55%).

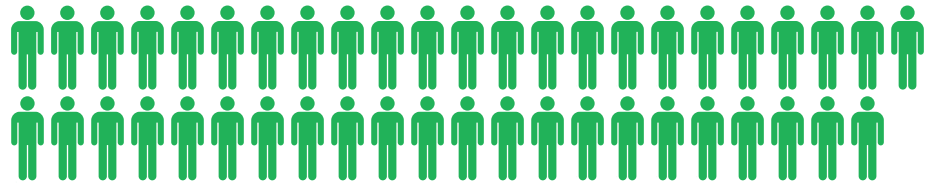
<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – National Center for Health Statistics. (2019). Firearm Mortality by State. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2HfXEsu>

<sup>2</sup> An introduction to the KHIP question instructed respondents to "please include weapons such as pistols, shotguns and rifles, but not BB guns, starter pistols, or guns that cannot fire. Include those kept in a garage, outdoor storage area or motor vehicle."

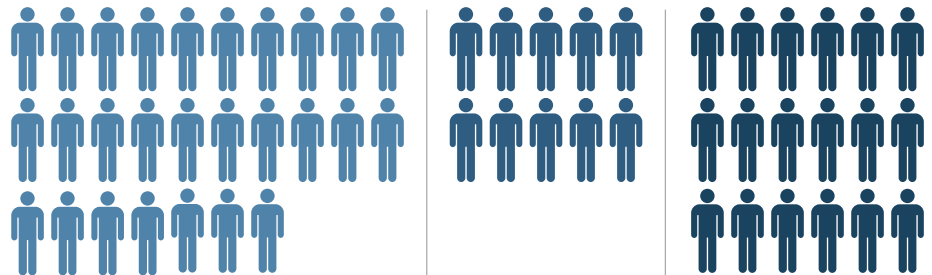
These findings, unless otherwise noted, are from the Kentucky Health Issues Poll, funded by the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and Interact for Health. The Kentucky Health Issues Poll was conducted Oct. 16-Dec. 6, 2019, by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati. A random sample of 1,559 adults from throughout Kentucky was interviewed by telephone. This included 468 landline interviews and 1,091 interviews with cell phone users. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to  $\pm 2.5\%$ . There are other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as nonresponse, question wording or context effects that can introduce error or bias. For more information about the Kentucky Health Issues Poll, please visit [www.healthy-ky.org](http://www.healthy-ky.org) or [www.interactforhealth.org/about-khip/](http://www.interactforhealth.org/about-khip/).

### Kentucky adults with ...

No firearm in or around home **45%**



A firearm in or around the home **55%**



**27%** Unloaded

**10%** Loaded, locked

**18%** Loaded, unlocked

SOURCE: 2019 Kentucky Health Issues Poll (released March 2020)



According to a national poll by the Pew Research Center in 2017, about 4 in 10 Americans (42%) live in a household with a gun.<sup>3</sup>

Responses varied by region. Adults in more rural areas such as Eastern (67%) and Western Kentucky (63%) were more likely

<sup>3</sup> Pew Research Center. (2019). 7 Facts about guns in the U.S. Retrieved from <https://pewrsr.ch/32Hlgzz>

than adults in other regions to keep firearms around their home. Louisville-area adults were least likely to report having a firearm in or around their home (40%). (See map on next page.)

Men (65%) were more likely than women (47%) to report having a firearm in or around their home.

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## Among Kentucky adults with guns, 1 in 2 keep guns loaded

KHIP asked those who keep guns in or around their homes: "Are any of these firearms now loaded?" Nearly half of Kentucky adults who keep guns in their homes (48%) reported that those guns are loaded. This has increased since KHIP first asked this question in 2011 (35%).

## Among Kentucky adults with loaded guns, 2 in 3 keep guns unlocked

KHIP then asked those with loaded guns in the home "Are any of these firearms also unlocked?" Nearly 2 in 3 Kentucky adults who keep loaded guns in their homes (64%) reported these guns are also unlocked. This has remained nearly the same since KHIP first asked the question in 2011 (57%).

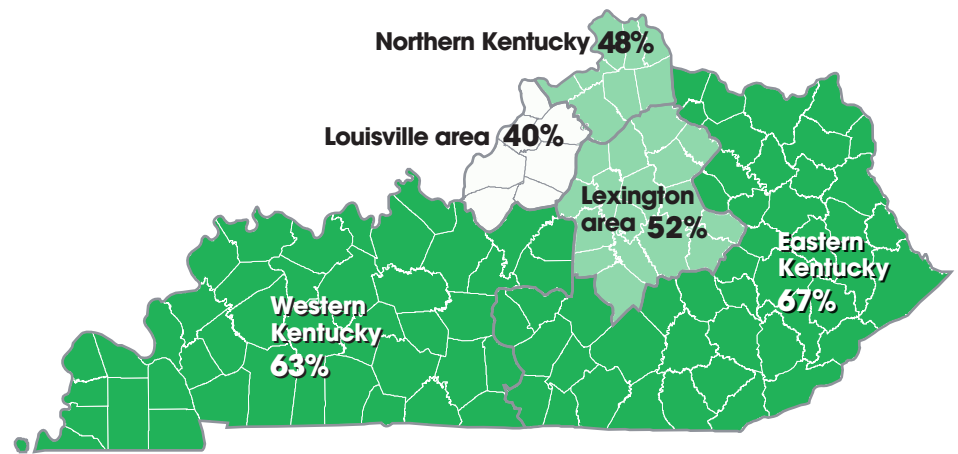
Among Kentucky adults who live in a home with a child, 6 in 10 reported having a firearm in or around the home (56%). Nearly 3 in 10 of these homes with children (28%) reported having a loaded firearm in the home. More than 1 in 10 adults in homes with children (15%) reported having a firearm in the home that is both loaded and unlocked. This has not changed since 2016.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, firearms should be stored unloaded, locked and separate from ammunition in order to prevent accidental injury.<sup>4</sup> This is especially important in homes with children. Currently, 28 states<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics. (2012). *Policy Statement: Firearm-Related Injuries Affecting the Pediatric Population*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/38aaz1K>

<sup>5</sup> California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

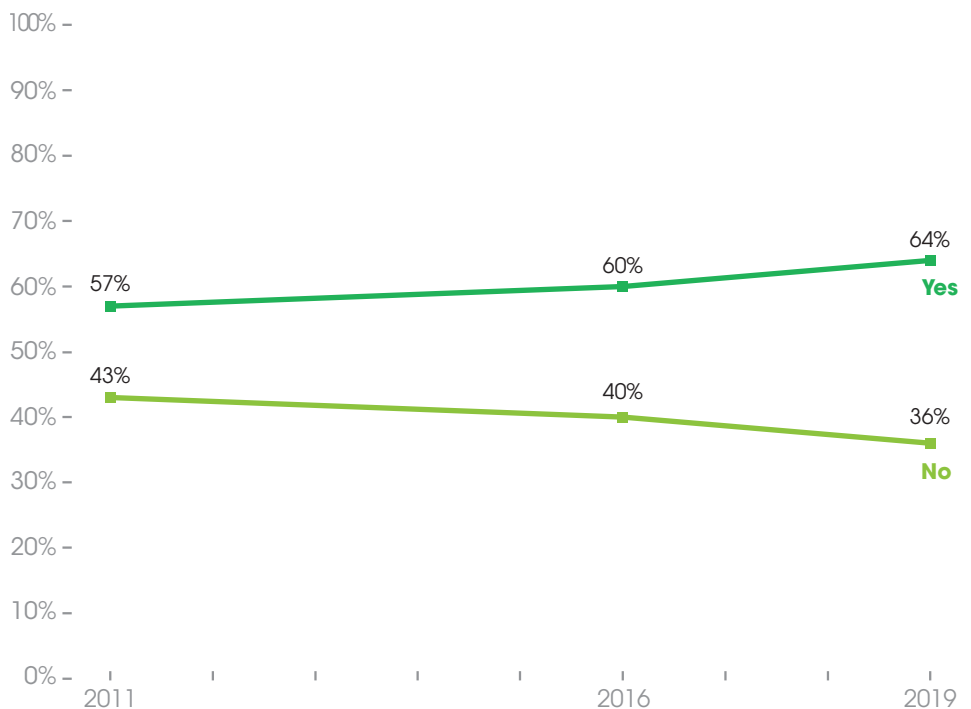
Percentage of Kentucky adults by region who keep firearms in or around home



SOURCE: 2019 Kentucky Health Issues Poll (released March 2020)



Are any firearms around your home loaded and unlocked?



SOURCE: 2019 Kentucky Health Issues Poll (released March 2020)



including Kentucky<sup>6</sup> have child access prevention laws for firearms. These laws are broad and range from making it illegal for adults to store guns in a place where a child could easily access and fire it to prohibiting adults from recklessly providing minors with certain firearms.<sup>7</sup> Eleven states<sup>8</sup> have

<sup>6</sup> For more information about the specifics of Kentucky's law, please visit <https://bit.ly/38yVG2E>

laws requiring safe storage laws or specific gun lock requirements regardless of the presence of children.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> RAND Corporation. (2018). *The Effects of Child-Access Prevention Laws*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2OS4NE6>

<sup>8</sup> California, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.

<sup>9</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation. (2019). *States with Firearm Laws Designed to Protect Children*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2OMYZvo>