

Oregon Domestic Violence and Guns

October 2014

This fact sheet contains an update.

Oregon has some laws restricting access to firearms by domestic abusers. Much more can be done to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous persons, including convicted domestic abusers, stalkers, and persons subject to domestic violence protective orders.

State gun and domestic violence overview

Oregon is home to a staggering amount of gun violence.

- From 2002 to 2011, 4,007 people were killed with guns in Oregon. That is more than the number of all U.S. combat deaths in the Iraq War.¹
- Somebody is killed with a gun in Oregon every 21 hours: In 2011 alone, there were 420 gun deaths in the state.²

Domestic violence fatalities are prevalent in Oregon, and they are frequently a result of gun crime.

- According to the FBI, there were 138 domestic violence homicides in Oregon from 2003 to 2012, which include both male and female victims.
- Of those homicides, more than half of the victims—56.5 percent—were killed with guns.³

Women are far more at risk to be victims of fatal domestic violence, and guns play a significant role in that violence.

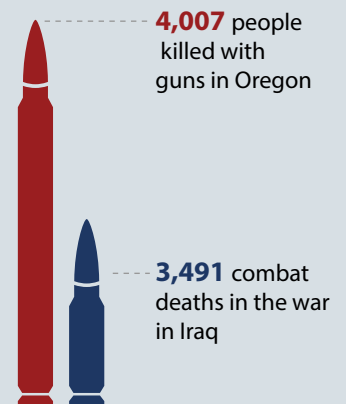
- Of the 269 female homicide victims in Oregon from 2003 to 2012, 113 were killed as a result of a domestic violence incident.⁴
- Firearms accounted for the murders of 145 women in Oregon from 2002 to 2011.⁵

Overview of Oregon laws to protect women from abusers and stalkers

Oregon has few laws to prevent abusers from having easy access to guns.

- Oregon does not explicitly prohibit the possession of a firearm by domestic violence misdemeanants but does prohibit transferring a firearm when the transferor knows or reasonably should know that the recipient has been convicted of a “misdemeanor involving violence” within the previous four years.⁶
- Oregon does not require the surrender of firearms or ammunition by domestic abusers who have become prohibited from possessing firearms or ammunition under federal law.
- Oregon does not explicitly authorize or require the removal of firearms or ammunition at the scene of a domestic violence incident.

From 2002 to 2011, 4,007 people were killed with guns in Oregon. That is more than the number of all U.S. combat deaths in the Iraq War.



From 2003 to 2012, 59.3 percent of female domestic violence homicide victims in Oregon were killed with a gun.



- Oregon law also does not bar stalking misdemeanants from purchasing or possessing firearms.
- Oregon requires a background check for private sales at gun shows but not for sales that take place over the Internet or at other locations.⁷

Support for doing more to protect women from abusers and stalkers in Oregon

Most Oregon voters strongly support expanding background checks to keep guns from criminals, domestic abusers, and other dangerous people.

- In a January 2014 poll conducted by Public Policy Polling, 78 percent of Oregonians surveyed supported requiring a background check on all gun buyers. Additionally, 74 percent of Oregon voters supported prohibiting anyone convicted of stalking or subject to a restraining order for domestic violence from buying a gun.⁸

Case study

We need universal background checks and other important measures to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous abusers.

- Randall Engels shot and murdered his wife, Amy, and two children, Bailey and Jackson, in Dundee, Oregon, on July 4, 2012, before committing suicide. In the weeks before the shooting, Amy moved her children out of their family home and told Engels that she was filing for divorce. Engels had a history of domestic violence, and family members told police following the shooting that Engels was physically abusive to Amy and emotionally abusive to the entire family. Engels purchased a .357 revolver from a gun dealer several weeks prior to the shooting.^{9*}

***Update, October 21, 2014:** This fact sheet has been updated with a more recent case study.

Where does Oregon stand on laws to protect women from abusers and stalkers?



Misdemeanant domestic abusers prohibited?



Individuals subject to a domestic violence protective order prohibited?

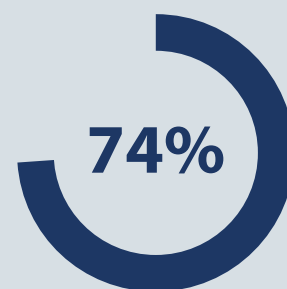


Stalkers prohibited?



Background checks required on all gun sales?

A majority of Oregon voters support prohibiting convicted stalkers and people subject to domestic violence restraining orders from buying guns.



Endnotes

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System)," available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed August 2014); U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Casualty Status (2014), available at <http://www.defense.gov/NEWS/casualty.pdf>.
2. Ibid.
3. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Supplemental Homicide Data (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003–2012).
4. Ibid.
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System)."
6. Or. Rev. Stat. § 166.470(1)(g).
7. Or. Rev. Stat. §§ 166.434(1), 166.438.
8. Public Policy Polling, "Oregon Survey Results," January 2014, available at <http://cdn.americanprogressaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/OregonResults12414.pdf>.
9. Crimesider Staff, "Oregon Triple Murder: Randall Engels created new persona before killing family, self," CBS News, August 10, 2012, available at <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/oregon-triple-murder-randall-engels-created-new-persona-before-killing-family-self/>; Associated Press, "Man created fake persona before killing family," KATU 2 News, August 9, 2012, available at <http://www.katu.com/news/local/Man-created-fake-persona-before-killing-family-165668456.html>.