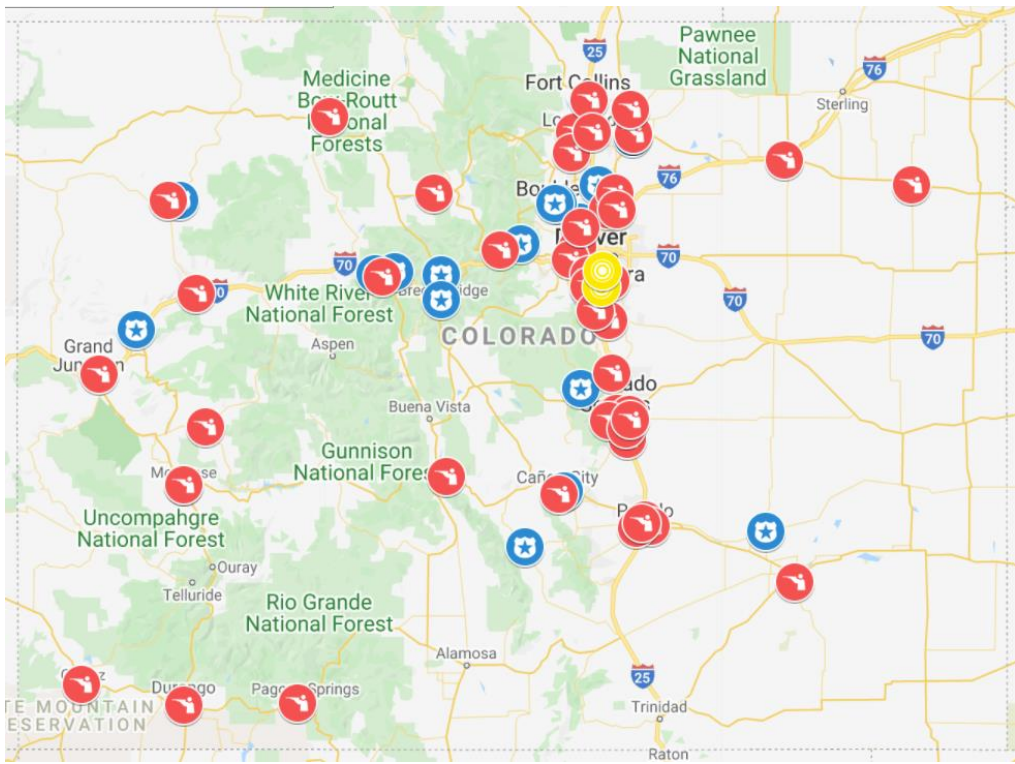


# The effect of Extreme Risk Protection Orders on the Concept of Voluntary Out-of-Home Firearm Storage: Results from a Qualitative Study in Two States

Leslie Barnard, MPH, Department of Epidemiology Colorado School of Public Health; Chris Knoepke, PhD, MSW, Department of Medicine, University of Colorado School of Medicine; Megan McCarthy, Department of Emergency Medicine, University of Colorado School of Medicine; Bonnie J Siry-Bove MSS Research Assistant, Department of Emergency Medicine, University of Colorado School of Medicine; Rachel L. Johnson, MS, Department of Biostatistics & Informatics, Colorado School of Public Health; Sara Brandspigel, MPH, Injury and Violence Prevention Center, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus; Lauren Rooney, MPH, Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center, University of Washington; Marian Betz, MD, MPH, Department of Emergency Medicine, University of Colorado School of Medicine

## Background

- Suicide is a leading and growing cause of death in the United States, with firearms used in half of all suicides
- Reducing firearm access during a crisis can prevent suicide
- Multiple states have developed storage maps identifying locations for voluntary, temporary out-of-home firearm storage.



- Non-voluntary options such as Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs) allow designated “petitioners” to request the temporary restriction of firearm access for someone with imminent risk of harm to self or others.
- However, ERPO laws have been controversial, and their implementation occurred at the same time as voluntary programs

## Objectives

We sought to understand how ERPO laws impact views and experiences of stakeholders and storage providers on voluntary storage options.

## Methods

- Between 10/2020 and 5/2021, the study team interviewed stakeholders in Colorado and Washington State, including firearm ranges and retailers, law enforcement agencies (LEAs), and public health and firearm rights organizations.
- Semi-structured interviews were conducted and recorded. We used a mixed deductive and inductive approach to code transcripts and analyzed coded data to identify dominant themes.

## Results

Table 1. Representative quotes related by stakeholder and theme

Stakeholder	Quote	Theme
Retailer/Range	“I would say...the voluntary requests are something that I control and I can say yes or no to based on my relationship with the person who is making a request. If I was subjected to a legal requirement to carry out a court ordered storage, then that would definitely be a negative thing for my willingness to continue engaging.”	Willingness to provide storage
LEA	“I don't see there's any real difference in our willingness to accept the firearms. Generally speaking there, there are no hesitations, if anything, the court ordered surrenders, they're actually a lot more work for us. Because we have to provide detailed receipts to the person who's been ordered. It just gets convoluted. And unfortunately you know, we just keep making things more and more complex.”	Willingness to provide storage
Public Health Organization	“I do think that there's a barrier, um, with communities who have a distrust, um, uh, of law enforcement or the criminal justice system, um, for good reason. Um, so talking about our black and Brown communities across the state, I think that that's also a huge hurdle.”	Potential inappropriate use
Firearm Organization	“I think the process is heavily abused, especially like in divorce cases, it is notorious. I think any attorney will tell you that, the first thing you do to harass the person on the other side of the suit is to get a protection order, and demand that their guns be collected. So, the process has been so abused that it has no moral standing anymore.”	Potential inappropriate use
Firearm Organization	“There's, been multiple deaths with the enforcement of an ERPO or the serving of an ERPO because the police come in at any given time, they're going in hot, they're going in like they do for a drug raid or a hostage situation. So, the person who is on the other side of that door has no idea what's happening. As far as they know, there's a home invasion coming in and you have individuals on both sides opening fire. That's a problem and that's and I've got some very choice words about SWAT and the fact that it's over being overused.”	Harm in enforcement

We conducted 95 interviews with 100 participants

- 31 firearm retailers/ranges
- 17 LEAs
- 52 organizations

Themes about the effect of ERPOs on voluntary, temporary firearm storage were views or concerns that:

- (1) ERPOs further alienate those who might have sought or offered voluntary storage by (a) putting all parties (LEA and firearm owners) at risk of physical harm during enforcement and (b) their potential to be used inappropriately, and
- (2) Voluntary storage providers may or may not be willing to store firearms resulting from an ERPO.

## Recommendations

While both voluntary and non-voluntary firearm storage approaches can be used to reduce firearm suicide risk, the simultaneous presence of both options can raise challenges.

Our study suggests the need to clearly distinguish between voluntary and non-voluntary storage. Understanding stakeholder views on voluntary and non-voluntary storage options support the development of acceptable and feasible programs for out-of-home firearm storage during times of suicide risk.