

Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Domestic Violence and Firearms
Position Paper

The Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) recognizes domestic violence as a physically and psychologically damaging cultural, social and criminal problem and is committed to its elimination. ICADV recognizes that violence occurs in all types of relationships, that everyone is affected by it, and that the solution involves everyone.

ICADV believes that firearm violence is a social and health problem, not just a criminal justice issue, as firearm fatalities frequently occur in the context of domestic violence. In 2002 in Indiana, 64 individuals died due to domestic violence. Sixty-four percent were the result of firearm violence.

ICADV believes that there is a very real connection between firearms and domestic violence. Firearms profoundly affect the dynamics of domestic violence, as they are used to intimidate, frighten, maim, and kill, and their presence significantly increases the lethality of violent interaction between intimate partners.

ICADV believes that leaving a relationship can be the most dangerous time for the survivor and that the act of separation, whether legal or physical, often triggers an escalation of the violence. If an abuser has access to a firearm, it is far more likely that homicide will result.

ICADV believes that abusers who possess firearms pose a lethal threat both to those they have abused and to the wider community including children, family members, and innocent bystanders.

ICADV believes that all court forms that relate to civil or criminal domestic violence cases should have questions relating to access, possession and presence of firearms. Judges should take every opportunity to ask about the presence of firearms when issues of domestic violence are presented. Judges should also facilitate NCIC background checks by being responsive to requests from the FBI for information concerning their orders and final disposition records.

ICADV believes that respondents of protective orders, workplace restraining orders and no contact orders should be banned from possessing, controlling, or using any firearm or ammunition while the order is in effect. All persons convicted of a crime of domestic violence should be banned for life from possessing, controlling, or using any firearm or ammunition. ICADV believes that all laws designed to disarm abusers and prevent them from purchasing new firearms should be implemented effectively and completely.

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