

Firearms & Safety

in South Carolina

South Carolina Violent Death Reporting System



The South Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (SCVDRS) combines data from law enforcement reports, death certificates, and coroner/medical examiner reports (including toxicology) to pool data on violent deaths and their circumstances into one anonymous database. SCVDRS data includes decedents who were fatally injured and died within South Carolina whether or not they were South Carolina residents. South Carolina residents who were fatally injured or died outside of South Carolina are not included in this report. Therefore, SCVDRS death counts and rates may differ from South Carolina DPH Vital Statistics.

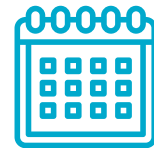
From 2017 to 2021...



South Carolina had **78** deaths due to unintentional firearm discharges and a mortality rate **2.4x higher** than the U.S. ^{1,2}



The average medical cost of an unintentional firearm death in South Carolina **increased 97%**, from \$13,133 to \$25,873. ²



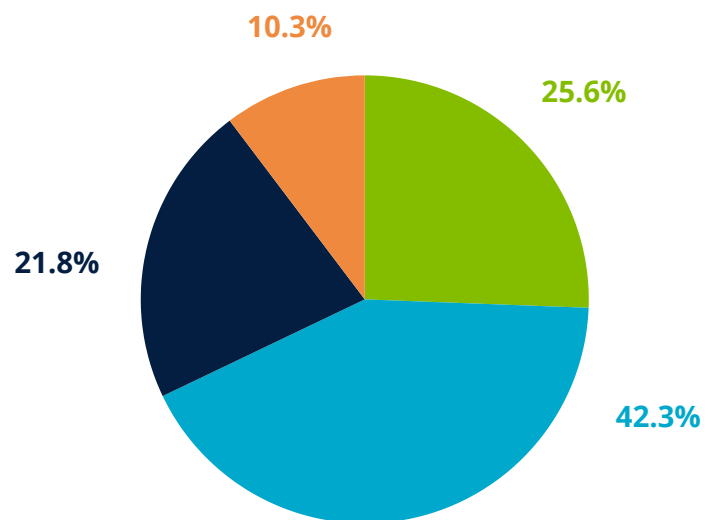
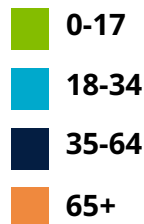
There were **4,157** years of potential life lost in South Carolina due to unintentional firearm deaths. ²

Unintentional Firearm Decedents by Demographics ¹

Unintentional Firearm Deaths, by Age Group

42.3% of decedents were aged 18 to 34 years old.

Among child decedents, **60%** were aged 1 to 4 years old.



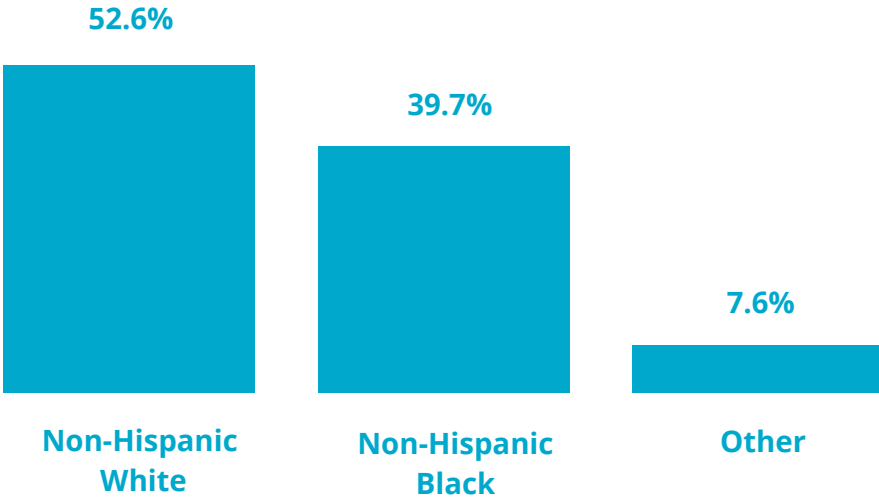
From 2017-2021, 90% of unintentional firearm decedents were male.

91%
are males

vs.

9%
are females

Unintentional Firearm Deaths, by Race



Over **half** of unintentional firearm decedents were **non-Hispanic White**. **60.0%** of children aged 0 to 17 were non-Hispanic Black, whereas **76.0%** of adults aged 35 and older were non-Hispanic White.

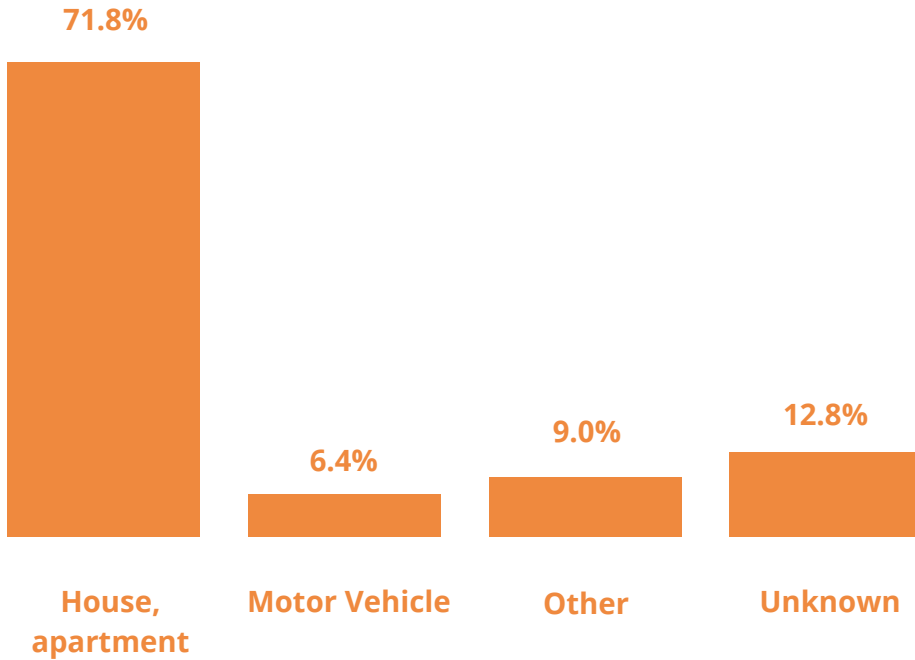
Note: Other Race/Ethnicity includes Hispanic, Non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander, and Non-Hispanic other/unspecified.

Among decedents 18 and older, 17.2% of unintentional firearm decedents were known to have served in the military.



Unintentional Firearm Deaths by Injury Locations ¹

Top Injury Locations of Unintentional Firearm Deaths



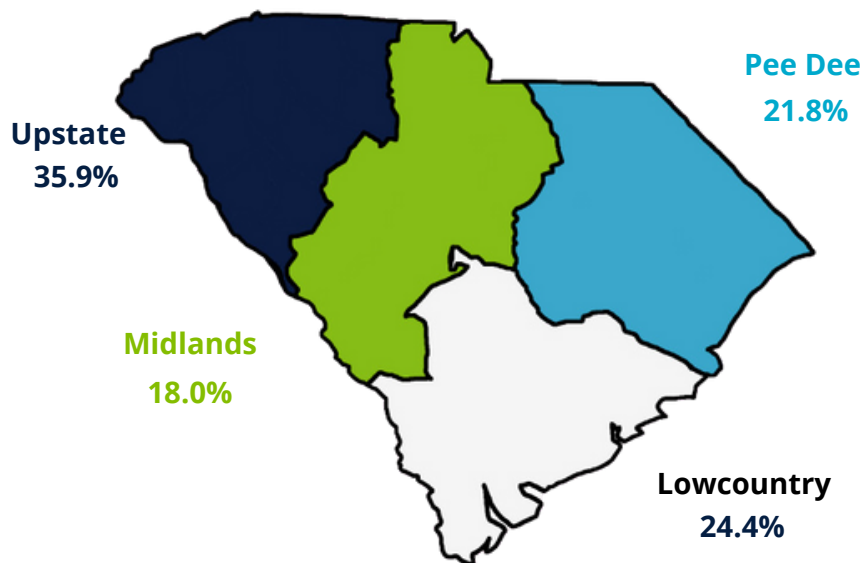
Almost **3/4ths** of unintentional firearm decedents were injured in a house or apartment.

Note: Other locations include natural area, hospital or medical facility, parking lot/public parking garage, and other commercial establishment.



Over **half** of unintentional firearm decedents were injured at their **residence**.

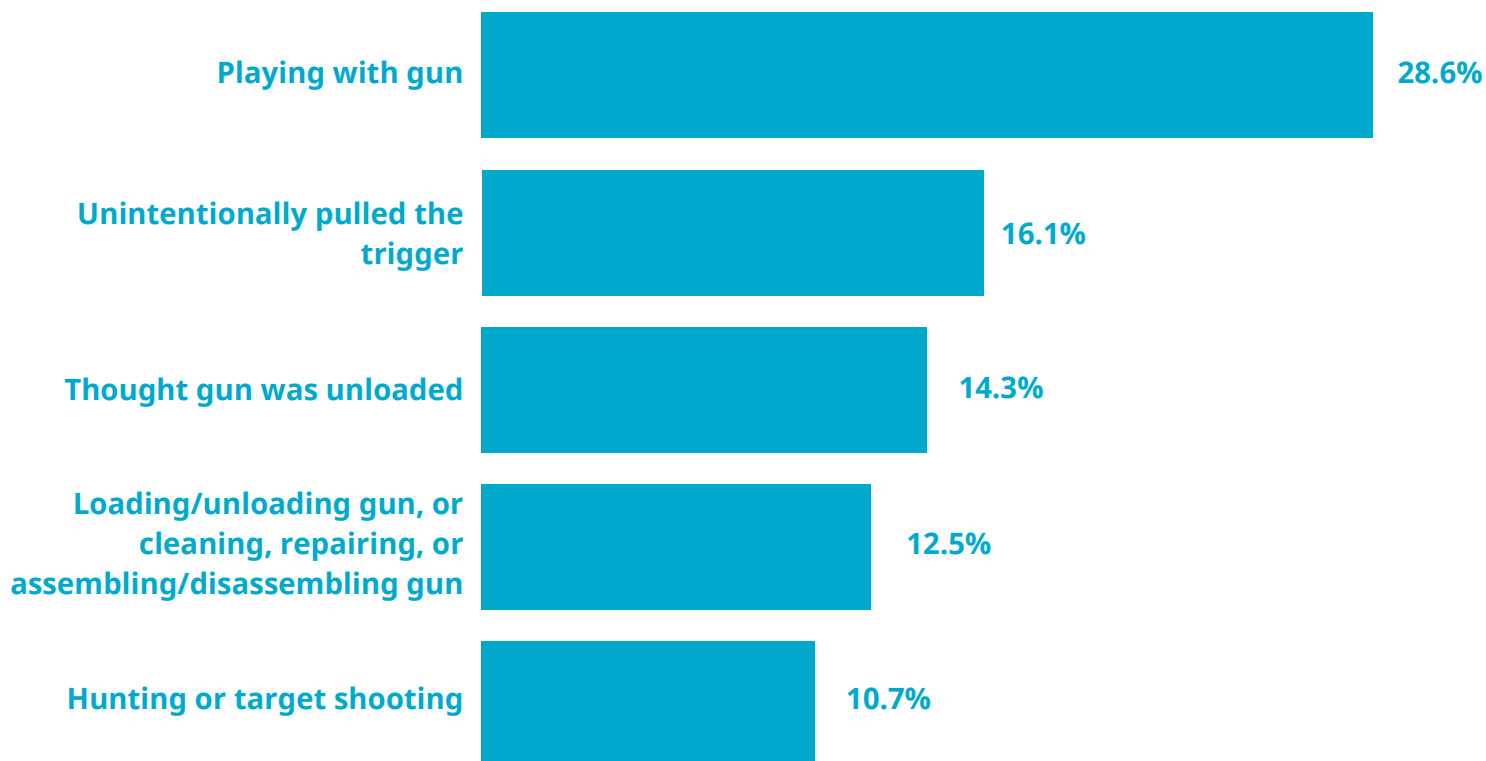
Unintentional Firearm Deaths by Region



While the **upstate** region saw the **highest percentage (35.9%)** and **rate (0.37 per 100,000 population)** of unintentional firearm injury deaths in South Carolina, the counties with the **highest rate** were counties in the **Lowcountry**, **Colleton (3.2 per 100,000 population)**, and **Orangeburg (1.2 per 100,000 population)**.

Circumstances Surrounding Unintentional Firearm Deaths ¹

Top 5 Circumstances Related to Unintentional Firearm Deaths

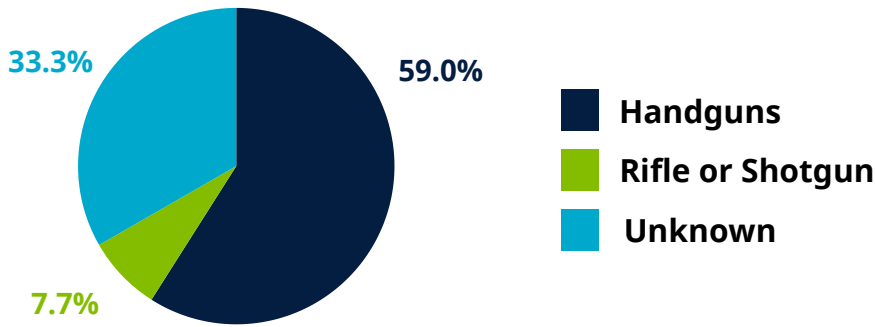


The shooter was **playing with the gun** in nearly **30%** of unintentional firearm deaths.



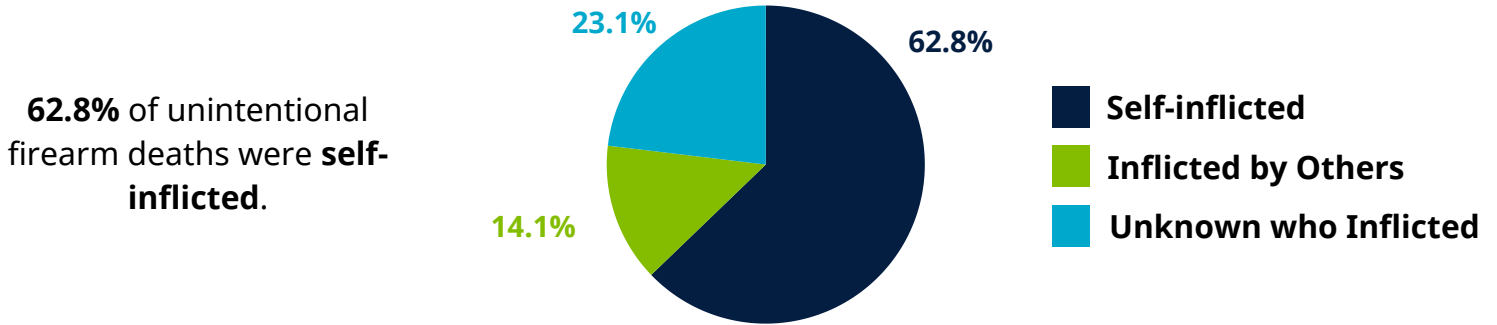
Note: Among unintentional firearm decedents with at least 1 known circumstance; circumstances were known for 72% of decedents. Decedents may have more than one known circumstance.

Firearm Type Used in Unintentional Firearm Deaths



Nearly **60%** of unintentional firearm deaths involved a **handgun**.

Shooter Type



62.8% of unintentional firearm deaths were **self-inflicted**.

Firearm Safety Tips ³

Learn the mechanical and handling characteristics of the firearm you are using.



Treat every firearm as though it is loaded.



Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction.



Always be sure of your target and what is in front and behind it.



If your gun fails to fire when the trigger is pulled, handle with care.

SCVDRS Data Limitations

- Known circumstances leading to the violent death are subject to the knowledge of family members, friends, and others who report to coroners and law enforcement during investigations.
- Availability of law enforcement and coroner reports for 2020 and 2021 were impacted by the pandemic, therefore, known circumstances may be underreported.

Support:

SCVDRS is supported by funds from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) under Cooperative Agreement 5 NU17CE010146-02-00. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by the NCIPC, CDC, DHHS or the U.S. Government.

Sources:

1. South Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (SCVDRS), 2017-2021
2. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Fatal Injury Data, National Vital Statistics System (NVSS), 2017-2021
3. National Shooting Sports Foundation <https://www.nssf.org/safety/rules-firearms-safety/>