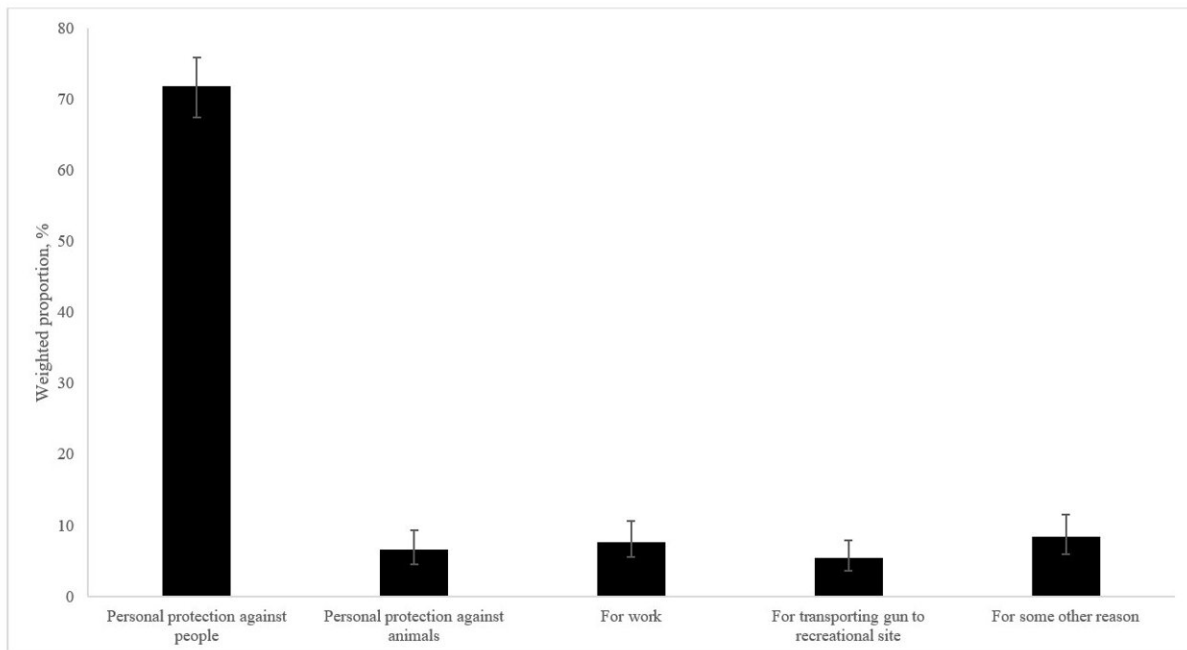


More US adults carrying loaded handguns daily, study finds

November 16 2022, by Kim Eckart



This chart shows a vast majority of handgun owners report carrying a handgun for protection against another person. Credit: Rowhani-Rahbar, et al./*American Journal of Public Health*

The number of U.S. adult handgun owners carrying a loaded handgun on their person doubled from 2015 to 2019, according to new research led by the University of Washington.

Data come from the 2019 National Firearms Survey (NFS), an online survey of U.S. adults living in households with firearms, including nearly 2,400 handgun owners. Compared to estimates from [prior UW-led research](#), the new study suggests that in 2019 approximately 16 million adult handgun owners had carried a loaded handgun on their person in the past month (up from 9 million in 2015) and 6 million carried every day (twice as many as carried daily in 2015).

Published Nov. 16 in the *American Journal of Public Health*, the study also found that a larger proportion of handgun owners carried handguns in states with less restrictive carrying regulations: In these states, approximately one-third of handgun owners reported carrying in the past month, whereas in states with more restrictive regulations, only about one-fifth did.

"Between increases in the number of people who own handguns and the number of people who carry every day, there has been a striking increase in handgun carrying in the U.S.," said lead author Dr. Ali Rowhani-Rahbar, a professor of epidemiology and Bartley Dobb Professor for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the UW.

Among the other findings reported in the new study:

- About 7 in 10 handgun owners said they carried a loaded handgun as protection against another person, dwarfing the number who said they carried as protection against an animal, for example, or for work
- 4 in 5 handgun owners who reported carrying were male, 3 in 4 were white, and a majority were between the ages of 18 and 44

Researchers pointed to some limitations of the study: Respondents were asked if they carried, and how often, but not where. It is possible that a person residing in a state with one type of permitting restrictions (or

none) could have carried their handgun in another state with different laws. The study also did not ask whether the respondent carried a handgun openly or concealed.

While the [data](#) are from 2019, researchers say the findings are timely, following the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in June that struck down a New York state handgun-carrying law. States, in general, have become less restrictive over the years regarding handgun carrying—more than 20 do not require permits to carry today, compared to only one such state in 1990. The differences highlighted in this study suggest that this behavior may be responsive to the types of laws governing carrying that pertain in a state.

"The Supreme Court ruling has already resulted in some [states](#)' loosening of laws related to handgun carrying," Rowhani-Rahbar said. "In light of that ruling, our study reinforces the importance of studying the implications of handgun carrying for [public health](#) and [public safety](#)."

More information: Trend in Loaded Handgun Carrying Among Adult Handgun Owners in the United States, 2015–2019, *American Journal of Public Health* (2022) [ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/ ... 105/AJPH.2022.307094](https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.1093/ajph.2022.307094)

Provided by University of Washington

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