

9 tips for success

- 1. Start small:** Start in spaces where it's easy to get those who use it to buy in (for instance, health clinics and places of worship). Don't start in spaces where there is already a problem with violence (such as schools in gang-ridden areas)
- 2. Be very clear about what the policy is:** Ensure particularly that those who work in the space know exactly what the policy entails
- 3. Be very clear about how to implement the policy:** Make sure that those who work in the space know exactly what to do if someone arrives carrying a gun
- 4. Offer training** to those who will have to implement the policy – it may be useful to bring police in for this
- 5. Ensure that ALL users of the space are involved:** This gives users a sense of ownerships, allow users to have a say in how the policy will be implemented so that they are more involved and committed to it. For instance, in a school, learners can develop their own slogans and logos
- 6. Make it visible:** Use multiple methods of communication, such as putting signs up at entrances, but also at high-traffic areas within the space such as cloakrooms and canteens; put it on letterheads and other stationary; events and awareness campaigns; advertising in media
- 7. Keep it visible:** Ensure signs remain visible, keep informing users of the spaces verbally, ensure new users of the area are aware
- 8. Educate users:** Gun Free Zones work best when users are educated about gun ownership as the policy is implemented, for instance, by running workshops with learners
- 9. Measure and monitor its success:** Keep an incident record preferably started before a zone is declared gun free. Most schools are already required to keep a record of incidents. Note the number of incidents involving guns. Are there more or less of these after a zone is made gun free?

About Gun Free South Africa

Gun Free South Africa (GFSa) is a national NGO, supported by a grant from the Open Society Foundation for South Africa. It has eight board members, all volunteers, and it is run by two part-time funded staff, one in Johannesburg and one in Cape Town.

GFSa supports Gun Free Zones for two reasons – to create spaces in which people feel safe from violence, and to shift people's attitudes, challenging the idea that guns offer security, thereby helping to reduce demand for guns.

The GFSa model relies on community participation to create and maintain Gun Free Zones. The NGO helps by providing advice and access to materials such as signs and pamphlets.



Contact Gun Free South Africa

Claire Taylor clare@gfsa.org.za
Adele Kirsten adele@gfsa.org.za
Pam Crowsley pamc@gfsa.org.za
www.gfsa.org.za



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NO GUNS WELCOME

A GUIDE TO SETTING UP AND MANAGING A GUN FREE ZONE



1. What is a Gun Free Zone?

A Gun Free Zone is a space in which no guns are welcome or allowed. It limits who can carry a gun where. Anyone who owns or manages a space can declare it a Gun Free Zone. They range from:

Zones enforced by trust

People entering the zone are not asked to declare if they are carrying a gun and are not searched for a gun. While guns are not taken away from people, they know that guns are not welcome.

Examples: places of worship, shebeens.



Zones enforced by security checks

People entering the zone are asked to declare if they have a gun or searched before they are allowed to enter. Anyone carrying a gun is not allowed to enter the space with that gun or they must put their gun in a safe that is provided.

Examples: banks, government departments, soccer stadiums.



Why go gun free?

- Guns put everyone at risk of injury and death. Without guns your space becomes safer for all.
- Having a gun nearby, or carrying a gun, is more likely to harm you than protect you. You are four times more likely to have your gun used against you than to be able to successfully defend yourself with it*
Data in South Africa and elsewhere
- Gun Free Zones give you the power to reclaim your space. Say yes to safety and no to violence.
- Declaring a space a Gun Free Zone is simple and low-cost – it requires very little technical knowledge.
- Gun Free Zones are powerful in changing attitudes: over time, carrying dangerous weapons comes to be seen as unacceptable, risky behaviour. Non-violence becomes the norm.



Gun Free Zones are enforceable under civil, rather than criminal, law: the law of right of admission allows you to

restrict those entering a space you own or manage. If you have declared your space a Gun Free Zone, you can keep anyone carrying a gun out. If someone does come in with a gun they will be committing a civil offence and can be prosecuted under laws that prohibit trespassing.

2. How to set up a Gun Free Zone

What are the challenges?

It is unlikely to work unless a zone's gun-free status is **well communicated** to and **well understood** by the public.

The policy is unlikely to work unless those who use the zone have **'bought in'** to the idea.

Dealing with those who violate the zone can be **risky**.

If those who violate the policy – in other words, those who enter the zone carrying guns – aren't dealt with properly, **the project can be undermined**.

The zone is more difficult to implement in spaces that don't have **secure boundaries**. For example, schools without perimeter fences: the priority here would be first to secure the boundary.

What will it cost?

A space that you own can be declared a Gun Free Zone with almost no funding at all:

- Gun Free South Africa will provide templates for signs and other materials that can be photocopied and laminated, or you can make your own.
- Most Gun Free Zones rely on volunteers to run the project.

However:

- Some spaces need to find funding to secure their boundaries, so that there is control over who enters the zone and how
- Relying on volunteers can reduce the time and commitment that those involved can give the project. Funding a few key facilitators would overcome this problem.
- If your Gun Free Zone is enforced by security checks, you will need funding for security guards, electronic gates and/or safes for gun storage.

Step 1: Establish the vision

Put into words what you want to achieve by making your space gun free. Involve important stakeholders (all those who have a vested interest in the space) to create a common vision.



Step 2: Develop the policy

Decide exactly:

- How you will alert people that a space is gun free
- How you will know if someone is carrying a gun
- What the consequences will be if someone tries to enter the space with a gun.

Creating awareness

You can tell people your space is gun free, put up signs in entrances and high-traffic areas such as canteens, run awareness campaigns, publicise it in the media and put it on all correspondence, such as your letterhead, your email signature and website.

Step 3. Prepare for implementation

- Consult all key stakeholders (users of the space and relevant members of the wider community such as local police) and address their concerns
- Train staff who will be responsible for implementing the policy
- Develop, distribute and install signs, registers and monitoring equipment e.g. metal detectors or safes
- Run awareness campaigns for users of the space

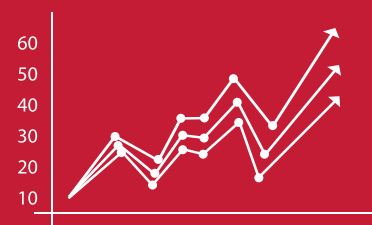
This is a
gun-free zone



Step 5. Maintain and monitor

To ensure that the Gun Free Zone continues to have impact:

- Keep awareness alive
- Review the policy regularly to identify problems that need addressing
- Track the policy's impact e.g. are fewer people trying to bring guns into your space? Have incidents of violence declined?



Step 4. Implement

The Gun Free Zone policy is now put into practice.



Enforcing your safe space

You can ask people to declare if they have a gun, install metal detectors, use physical searches at entrances or take it on trust.

If someone wants to enter with a gun you can –

- Provide a safe in which a gun owner can store the gun
- Restrict access: tell gun owners they can only enter the space if they do not have the gun on them
- Inform gun owners that they are going against policy and allow them into the space, but tell them that they must leave their gun at home next time

If someone ignores your policy and enters with a gun you can pursue civil charges of trespassing.