

A Gun Insurance Mandate Should:

Go beyond liability insurance.

Liability insurance is insurance designed to protect gun owners. An insurance requirement should be designed to help victims. It should encourage safe practices to protect potential victims from becoming actual victims; and it should compensate victims to prevent them and their families from being impoverished after a shooting.

Be adopted on a federal level.

Guns move around from state to state both legally and illegally. The continuous responsibility we need requires a national solution. Benefits are needed everywhere because deaths and injuries occur everywhere.

Be modeled on existing insurance types.

Guns are like cars in many ways—they have substantial dangers to the public, exist in huge numbers, have owners to buy the insurance, etc. But, differences are important as well. The best current insurance type to use as a model is worker's compensation insurance. It's no-fault with specific benefits and is based on a particular activity. Gun insurance should cover specific guns and pay anyone injured by them. It should cover medical costs, lost wages and provide extended benefits to dependent survivors.

Require no-fault insurance.

With most shootings it's hard to establish what happened and to prove fault especially when getting benefits requires proving fault on the part of the gun owner or proving permission was given to use the gun. Every case would end up in extended litigation; and victims who need medical care immediately would be locked out. Fault based insurance only works for cars because most victims have their own cars and the insurance companies work things out between themselves.

Require insurer responsibility to continue till another insurer takes over.

Tracking and registering guns is problematic, but that's not necessary to get insurance in place. Guns start out with manufacturers or importers who could be required to get the insurance. If responsibility is mandated to stay in effect until the insurance is replaced, then victims could contact the manufacturer and follow the chain of insurance responsibility to find where to make a claim. This is how ATF tracing works now, and insurers would be more cooperative than gun dealers.

Pay benefits directly to victims.

This is the key that makes it possible for insurance to cover the intentional shootings which make up the bulk of our gun violence problem. Many current kinds of insurance in many fields do cover intentional acts, even by the person buying the insurance, if the payments are not made to the person committing these acts. Persons opposed to gun responsibility and insurance industry spokespersons have been saying over and over that insurance can't cover intentional acts. This is not true.

Gun Insurance is a Tool for Creating Responsibility Around Guns

Lack of Regulation of Firearms

We have three major sources of deaths and injuries in the United States—guns, car accidents, and accidents in the workplace. The last two of these have well developed systems of regulation and insurance to help reduce the toll; but the third, guns, is allowed to go on with no real attempt to use the tools of society for that reduction. Just as insurance companies promote car safety to reduce losses, so they would promote gun safety.

Data on Losses, Costs and Insurance

This table is a comparison of these three major categories of activities with built in dangers.

	Guns	Cars	Jobs with Worker's Compensation Insurance
Approximate Number in US	300,000,000	195,000,000	126,000,000
Deaths	33,696	33,782	4,679
Injuries (Insurance Claims)	84,258	1,697,000	3,000,000
Insurance Claim Total per Year		\$137 Billion	\$60.2 Billion
Insurance Cost for Each per Year		\$1,115	\$478

Figures for cars from Insurance Information Institute (III) data. Figures for Jobs from III (2014) and National Academy of Social Insurance (2011). Only jobs covered by workers compensation are counted. Direct payments by employers included in claims.

After a gun insurance mandate is adopted, the total amount of claims for a system that is about as generous as current worker's compensation insurance would be approximately \$6 Billion per year. With an insurance loss ratio similar to worker's compensation, the premiums per gun could average a little as \$30 per year.

Not a Financial Burden to Gun Owners

The gun insurance cost would be small compared to cars and jobs. That is because the big cost to insurers is injuries (and smashed car property damage); these losses are much larger than for guns. Guns kill, create heartache and hardship for victims' families, and large indirect societal costs, but they wouldn't require insurance to be expensive.

The actual premiums for gun owners would vary greatly based on the risk presented in different situations. Responsible homeowners with only a few ordinary guns would probably be able to get their guns covered on their homeowners insurance at little or no extra cost. Gun owners with more dangerous weapons and bad records would encounter much higher premiums.

Gun Insurance Blog – <http://guninsuranceblog.com> has a detailed examination of the possibilities for mandating gun insurance.