



**SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE  
POLICE DEPARTMENT  
ERNESTO MORILLO, CHIEF OF POLICE**

201 South Orange Avenue  
South Orange  
New Jersey 07079  
[www.southorange.org](http://www.southorange.org)  
P 973.763.3000

The members of the South Orange Police Department wish to express our deepest sorrow to the people of Buffalo, Uvalde, and every other community that has been ravaged by the violence and loss of a mass shooting. Words fall short of expressing the grief we feel for you. We have all come to understand that these tragedies could occur to us, or any community, anywhere in this country. While we cannot claim to know the depth of your devastation, we will nonetheless pray for you, as we remain vigilant and deepen our efforts to build safety in the community we serve.

These terrible tragedies have yet again brought the issues of common sense gun reforms, mental health and bullying to the national forefront. They are evidence of the immediate need for bipartisan dialogue and greater resources to be dedicated in order to address these issues.

Our personal experiences as law enforcement officers have taught us that there are things that we as community members can do to help keep one another safe in the meantime.

Be alert and prepared to intervene when a loved one, friend or acquaintance is experiencing emotional instability and is also expressing an interest or fascination with firearms.

Maintain a strong cooperative relationship between schools and parents in order to provide children who are in emotional distress support when it is most needed. Speak to your children about bullying and other issues which can affect their mental health. Encourage them to notify a parent or teacher if they are aware of another student who is experiencing problems.

If you are a gun owner, practice firearms safety and responsible gun ownership.

- **Keep guns out of the sight and the reach of children.**
- **Store weapons locked, unloaded and apart from ammunition.**
- **Consider temporarily removing weapons from your home if any household member is experiencing a crisis.**
- **Surrender guns you no longer want to police for proper disposal. Gun buyback programs are offered and provide an opportunity to safely dispose of weapons that are no longer wanted by their owner.**

Gun owners can help keep illegal firearms off the street;

- **Store weapons in your home in a secure location such as a combination safe.**
- **Do not leave weapons inside a vehicle.**
- **Know where your firearms are at all times.**



**SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE  
POLICE DEPARTMENT  
ERNESTO MORILLO, CHIEF OF POLICE**

201 South Orange Avenue  
South Orange  
New Jersey 07079  
[www.southorange.org](http://www.southorange.org)  
P 973.763.3000

Additionally, all New Jersey law enforcement agencies have another tool to help keep communities safe, Extreme Risk Protective Orders. This “red flag” law allows police officers to request that a judge order the suspension of firearms access for at-risk individuals who, during periods of crisis pose an elevated risk of endangering themselves or others. We ask that you contact us if you believe there is danger so that we can work to fulfill our mission of protecting this community and the people that make it what it is.

These are just a few of the ways we can work together to reduce accidental discharges and prevent firearms from falling into the wrong hands. Please help us to keep our community safe!

Chief Ernesto Morillo  
South Orange Police Department