

2011

Firearms

Used in the Commission of Crimes

This report is available online at
<http://ag.ca.gov/publications/index.php#firearms>

Division of Law Enforcement
Bureau of Forensic Services
916-227-3635

California Penal Code section 34200* requires that the Attorney General shall provide the Legislature on or before April 15 of each year, commencing in 1998, a written report on the specific types of firearms used in the commission of crimes based upon information obtained from state and local crime laboratories. The report shall include all of the following information regarding crimes in which firearms were used:

- (a) A description of the relative occurrence of firearms most frequently used in the commission of violent crimes, distinguishing whether the firearms used were handguns, rifles, shotguns, assault weapons, or other related types of weapons.
- (b) A description of specific types of firearms that are used in homicides or street gang and drug trafficking crimes.
- (c) The frequency with which stolen firearms were used in the commission of the crimes.
- (d) The frequency with which fully automatic firearms were used in the commission of the crimes.
- (e) Any trends of importance such as those involving specialized ammunition or firearms modifications, such as conversion to a fully automatic weapon, removal of serial number, shortening of barrel, or use of a suppressor.

*Previously California Penal Code section 12039

Although legislation states that the data for this report should be based on information obtained from state and local crime laboratories, the legislation does not require local laboratories to report this information to the Department of Justice. Therefore, local law enforcement submits this information voluntarily, which limits the data received for inclusion. Data from the Department's Bureau of Forensic Services indicates that 119 of the 844 firearms examined during the reporting period qualify for inclusion in this report.

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Purpose

This report is prepared by the California Department of Justice, Bureau of Forensic Services (BFS), for the Legislature as directed by California Penal Code section 34200. The report details the specific types of firearms used in the commission of various crimes.

Scope

This report includes firearms examined during 2011 in the BFS Regional Criminalistics Laboratories.

Because BFS serves principally the rural areas of California, the data in this report may not represent gun-use trends within urban areas or within California as a whole.

Firearm Types (Figures 1 and 2)

Of the 119 qualifying firearms examined, there were 100 (84 percent) handguns, 12 (10.1 percent) rifles, and 7 (5.9 percent) shotguns. Of these firearms, 5 (4.2 percent) were assault weapons (as defined in California Penal Code sections 30510 and 30515) and 3 (2.5 percent) were classified as a short-barreled shotgun or rifle. The most commonly encountered caliber was 9mm Luger, followed by 40 Smith and Wesson (S&W), and 22 rimfire.

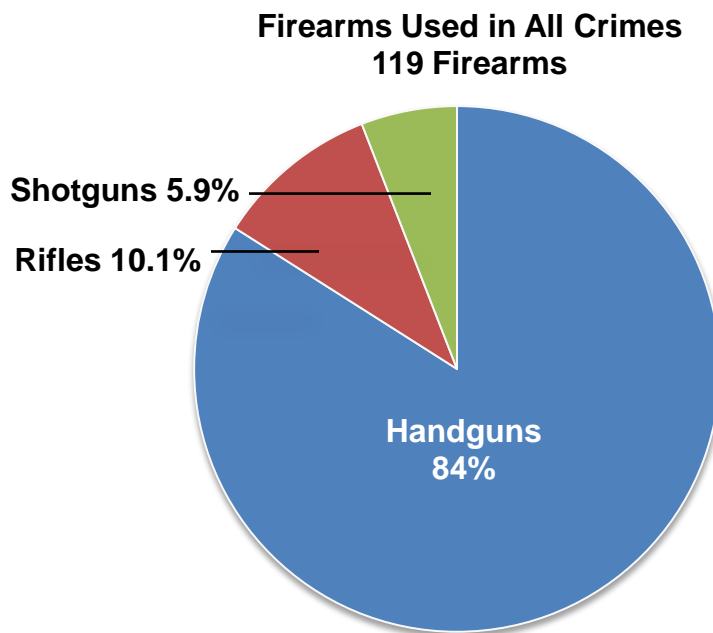


Figure 1

Weapons By Caliber

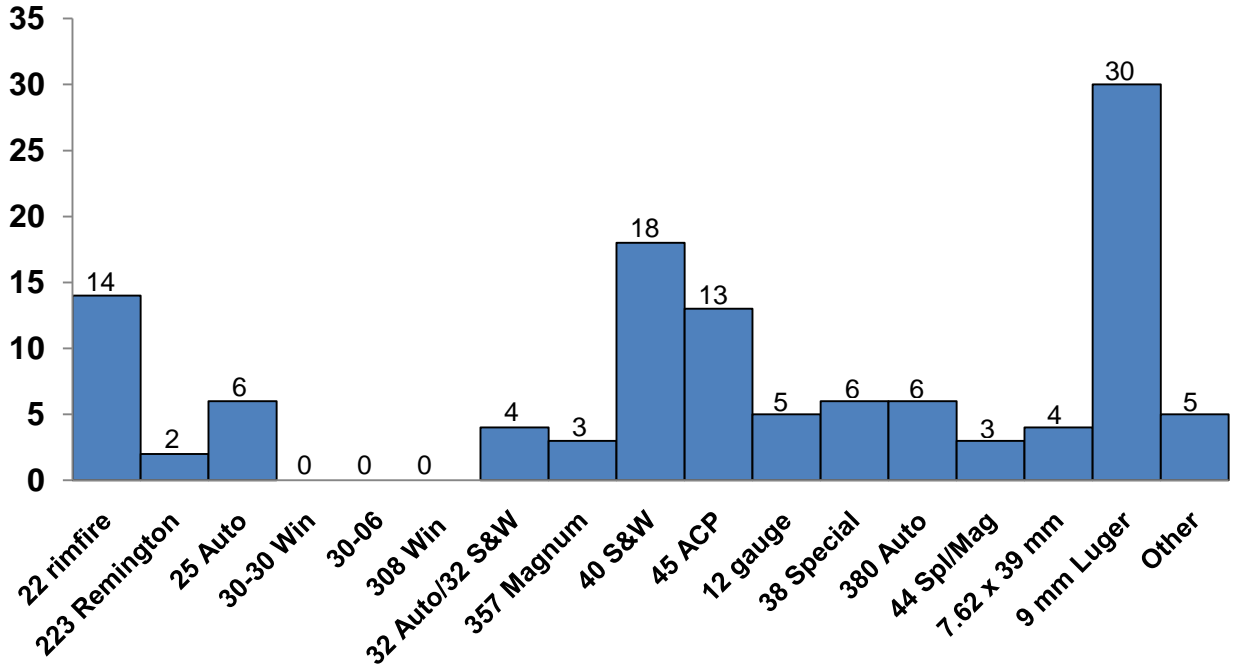


Figure 2

Crimes of Violence other than Homicide (Figure 3)

Of the firearms examined, 53 (44.5 percent of the total) were submitted in cases involving crimes of violence other than homicide. Of the 53 weapons, there were 44 handguns (83 percent), 5 rifles (9.4 percent), and 4 shotguns (7.6 percent).

Firearms Used in Crimes of Violence (other than Homicide) 53 Firearms

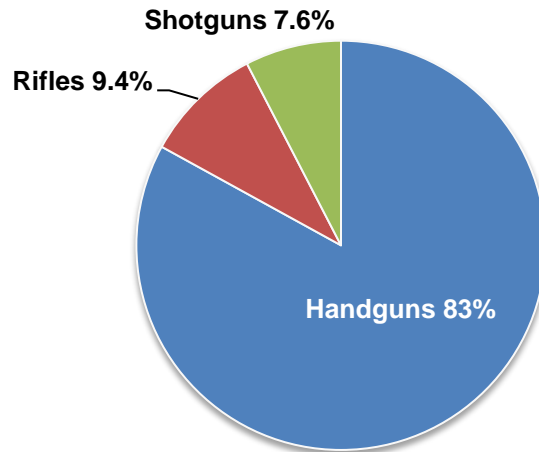


Figure 3

Homicides (Figure 4)

Of the 62 firearms (52.1 percent of the total) submitted in homicide cases, there were 53 handguns (85.5 percent), 6 rifles (9.7 percent), and 3 shotguns (4.8 percent).

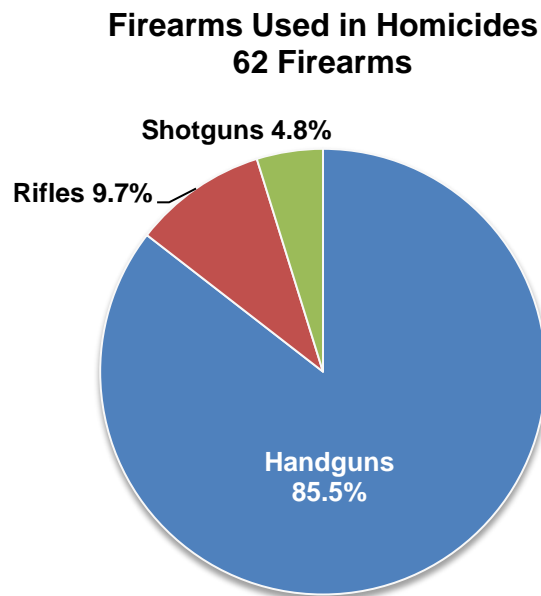


Figure 4

Street Gang Crimes (Figure 5)

Of the 12 firearms (10 percent of the total) identified as being related to street gang crimes, 11 were handguns (91.7 percent), and 1 was a shotgun (8.3 percent).

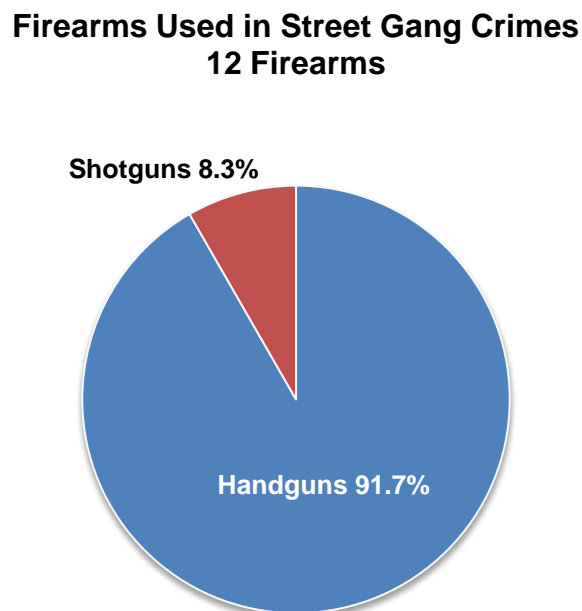


Figure 5

Drug Trafficking Crimes

The 1 firearm (0.8% of the total) identified as being used in drug trafficking crimes was a handgun.

Special Cases (Figure 6)

California Assault Weapons

Five of the firearms examined in 2011 were identified as California Assault Weapons (as defined in California Penal Code sections 30510 and 30515).

Stolen Firearms

Of the firearms examined, three were confirmed to have been reported stolen. For many of the other firearms examined, ownership status was not determined.

Serial Numbers Removed

Seven firearms (5.9% of the total) were submitted with the serial numbers removed.

Full Auto Firearms (Machine Guns, Submachine Guns or Full Auto Conversions)

No submachine guns or converted firearms were examined this year.

Short Barreled Rifles or Shotguns

Three of the examined firearms were classified as a short-barreled rifle or shotgun.

Officer-Involved Shooting Incidents

Of the 6 (5% of the total) firearms identified as being related to officer-involved shooting incidents, there were four handguns and two shotguns.

Silencers

No firearms equipped with silencers were examined this year.

Special Cases

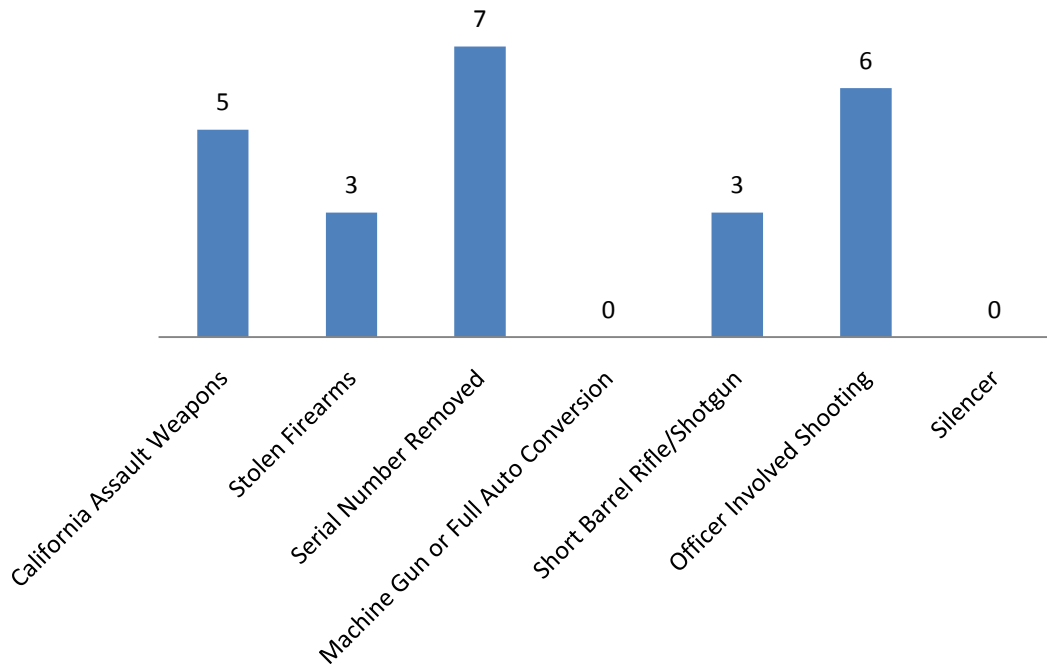


Figure 6

There was no reported use of armor piercing, exploding, Glazer-type incendiary or tracer ammunition. There were two reported uses of frangible ammunition.

California Assault Weapons by Year (Figure 7)

California Assault Weapon use has continued at a relatively low level since it was first reported.

California Assault Weapons Used on Crime by Year

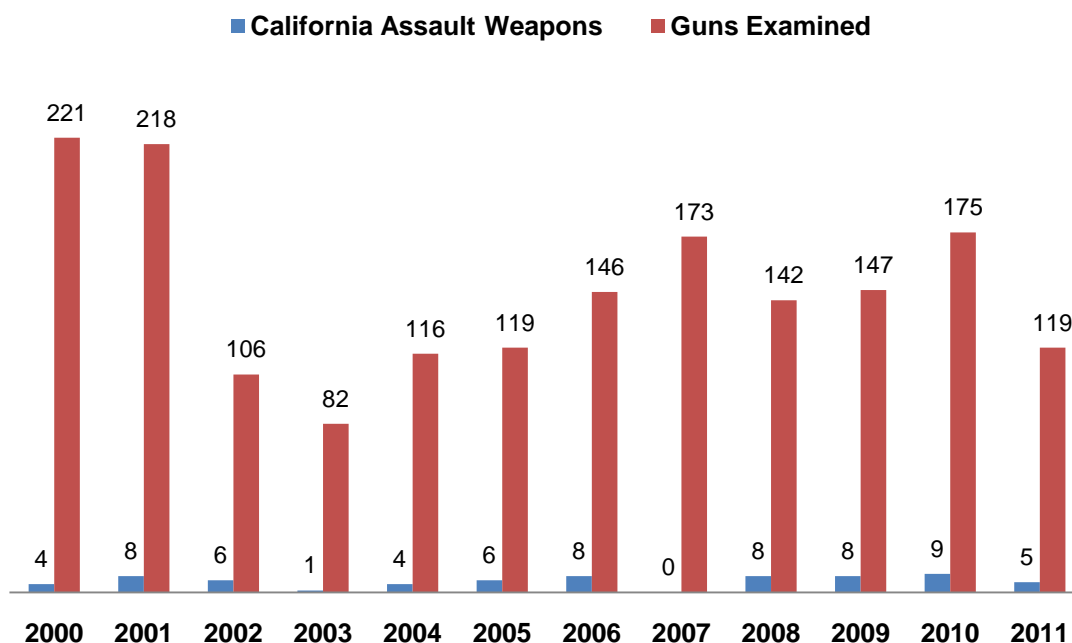


Figure 7