

2012

Firearms

Used in the Commission of Crimes

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Division of Law Enforcement

Bureau of Forensic Services

916-227-3635



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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)

Pursuant to Penal Code section 34200, the Department of Justice (DOJ) produces this annual report based on data obtained from state and local crime laboratories. Unfortunately, none of the local crime laboratories provided data to the DOJ for inclusion in this year's report. As a result, the 2012 annual report only includes data that was contributed by the DOJ crime laboratories.

Relying on data obtained exclusively from the DOJ crime laboratories tends to focus on crimes that were committed in the rural areas of California. Data from major cities are not included. This is because the DOJ crime laboratories primarily serve the rural areas while the local crime laboratories serve the urban and heavily populated areas of California. During 2012, data collected from the forensic laboratories of the DOJ's Bureau of Forensic Services revealed that 134 of the 617 completed examinations involved firearms that are qualified for inclusion in this report.

Table of Contents

Purpose	2
Scope	2
Firearm Types	2
Crimes of Violence Other than Homicide	3
Homicides	4
Street Gang Crimes	4
Drug Trafficking Crimes	4
Special Cases	5
California Assault Weapons by Year	6

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 2012 in the BFS Regional Criminalistics Laboratories.

Because the 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)

The 134 qualifying firearms that were examined included 117 handguns (87.3 percent), 13 rifles (9.7 percent), three shotguns (2.2 percent), and one machine gun (0.07 percent). Six (4.5 percent) of these firearms were assault weapons (as defined in California Penal Code sections 30510 and 30515) and one (0.07 percent) was classified as a short-barreled shotgun or rifle. The most commonly encountered caliber was 9mm Luger, followed by 40 S&W and 380 Auto.

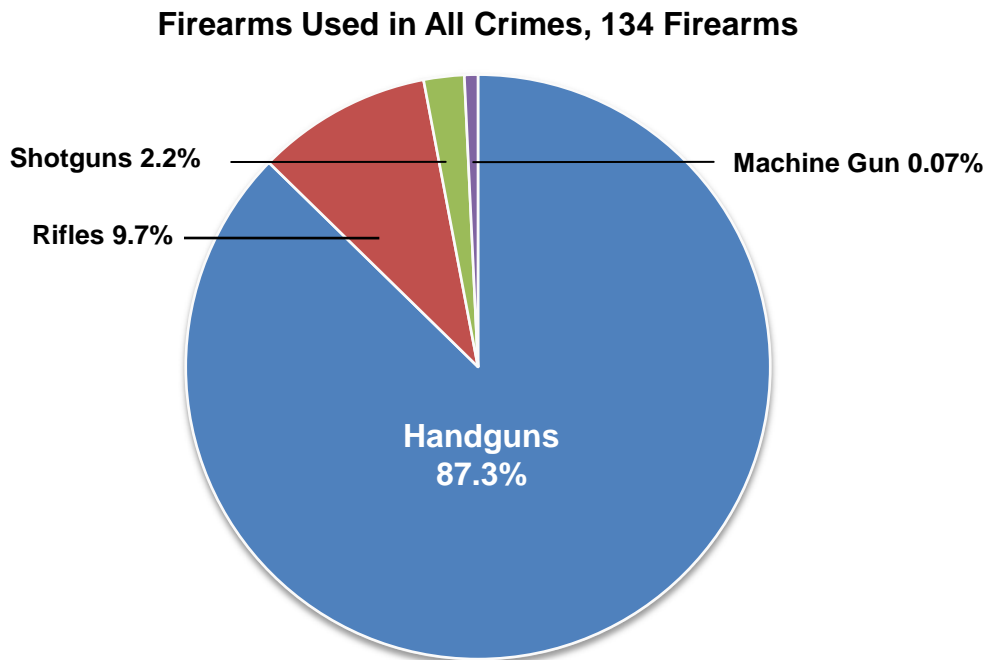


Figure 1

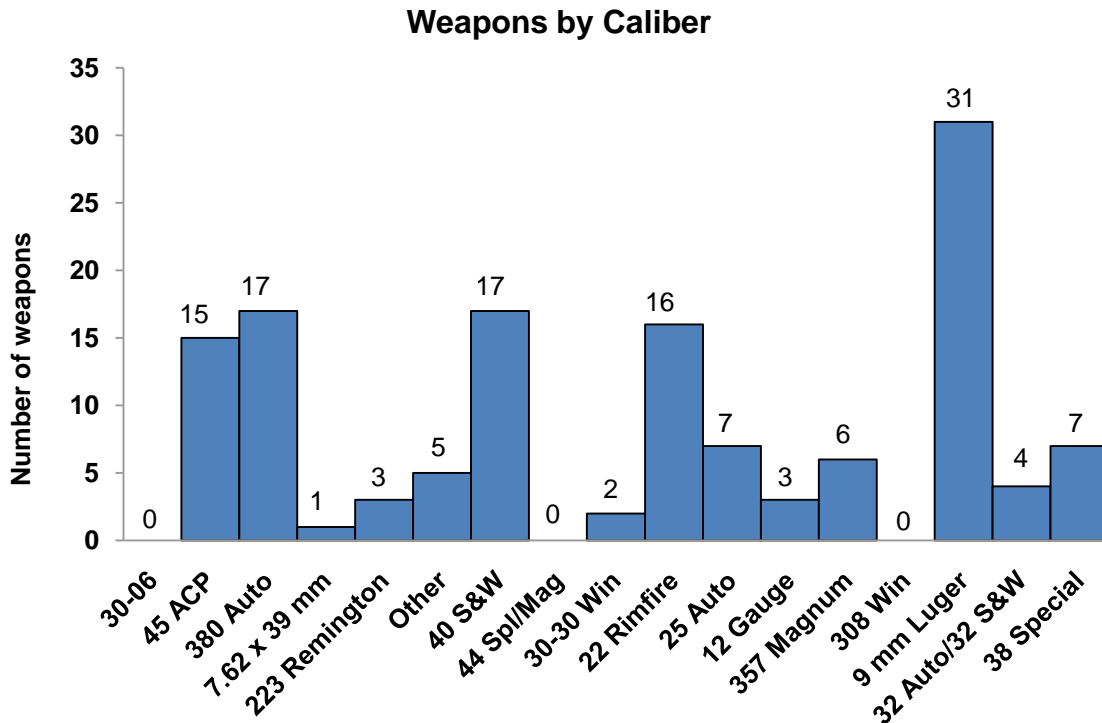


Figure 2

Crimes of Violence other than Homicide (Figure 3)

Eighty two (61.2 percent) of the firearms examined were involved in crimes of violence other than homicide. The 82 weapons included 68 handguns (82.9 percent), 11 rifles (13.4 percent), two shotguns (2.4 percent), and one machine gun (1.2 percent).

Firearms Used in Crimes of Violence (other than homicides) 82 firearms

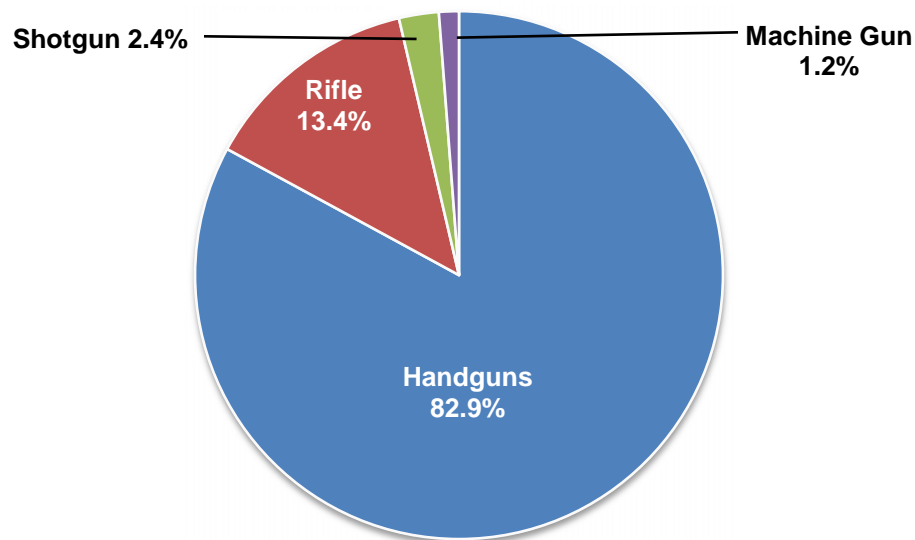


Figure 3

Homicides (Figure 4)

The 49 firearms (36.6 percent) that were submitted in homicide cases included 45 handguns (91.8 percent), three rifles (6.1 percent), and one shotgun (2 percent).

Firearms Used in Homicides (49 Firearms)

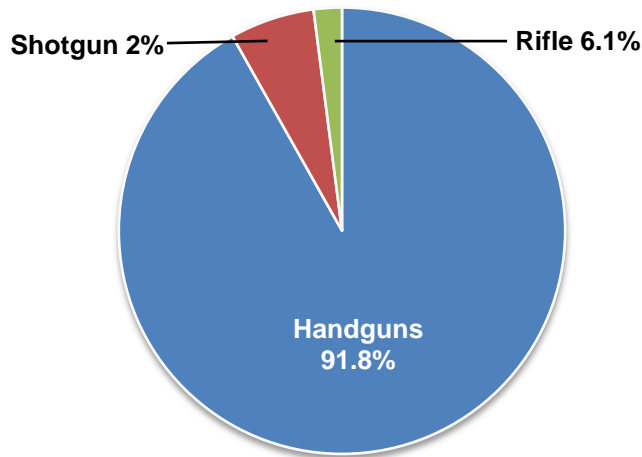


Figure 4

Street Gang Crimes (Figure 5)

The 18 firearms (13.4 percent) that were identified as being related to street gang crimes included 14 handguns (77.8 percent), two rifles (11.1 percent) and two shotguns (11.1 percent).

Firearms Used in Gang Crimes (18 Firearms)

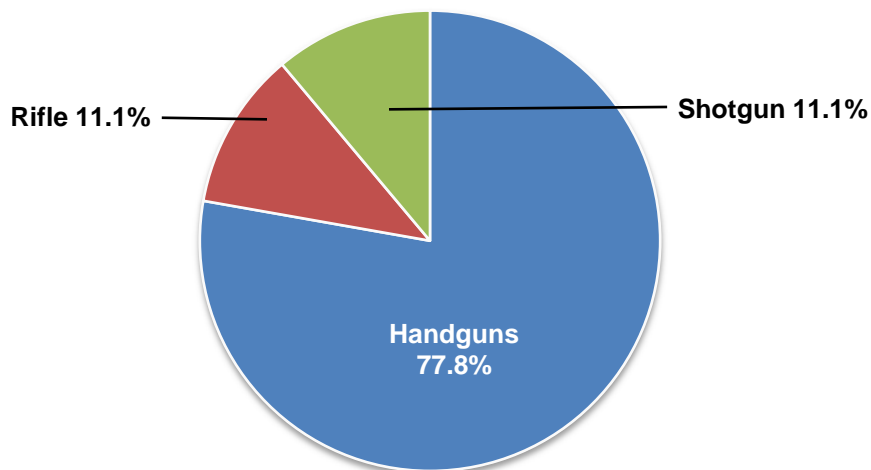


Figure 5

Drug Trafficking Crimes

The four firearms (0.3 percent) that were identified as being used in drug trafficking crimes were handguns.

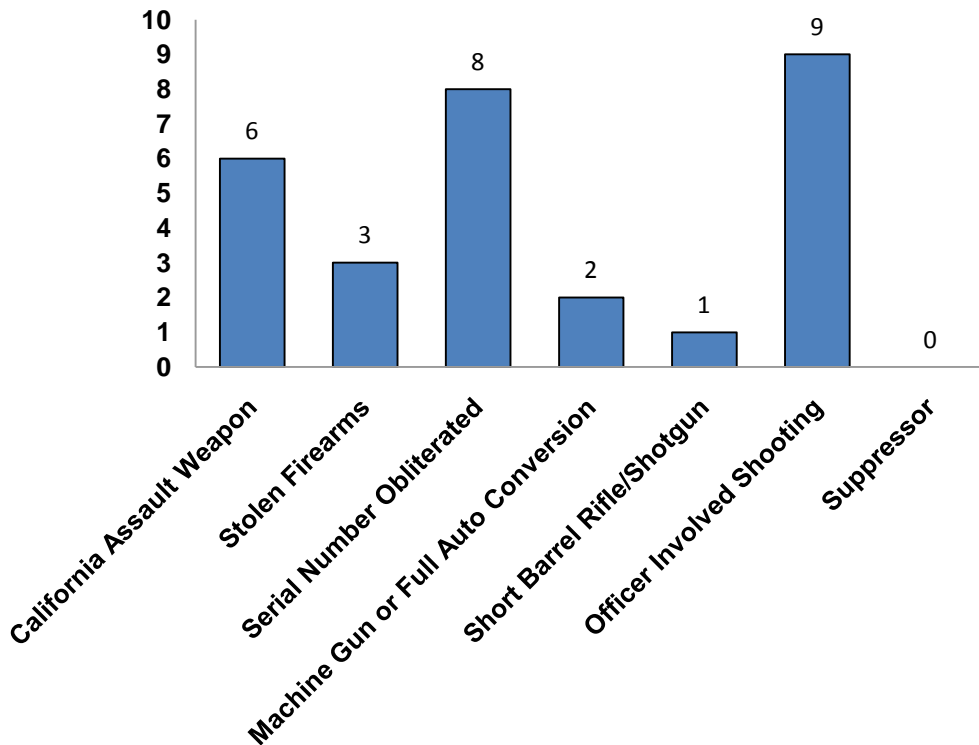


Figure 6

Special Cases (Figure 6)

California Assault Weapons

Six of the firearms examined in 2012 were identified as California Assault Weapons (as defined in California Penal Code sections 30510 and 30515).

Stolen Firearms

Three of the firearms examined were confirmed to have been reported stolen. Ownership status was not determined for three of the firearms that were examined.

Serial Numbers Removed

Eight firearms were submitted with their serial numbers having been removed.

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

Two submachine guns or converted firearms were examined this year.

Short Barreled Rifles or Shotguns

One of the examined firearms was classified as a short-barreled rifle or shotgun.

Officer-Involved Shooting Incidents

Nine of the firearms were identified as being related to officer-involved shooting incidents. They included six handguns and three rifles.

Suppressors

No firearms equipped with suppressors (silencers) were examined this year.

No unusual ammunition

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

California Assault Weapons by Year (Figure 7)

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

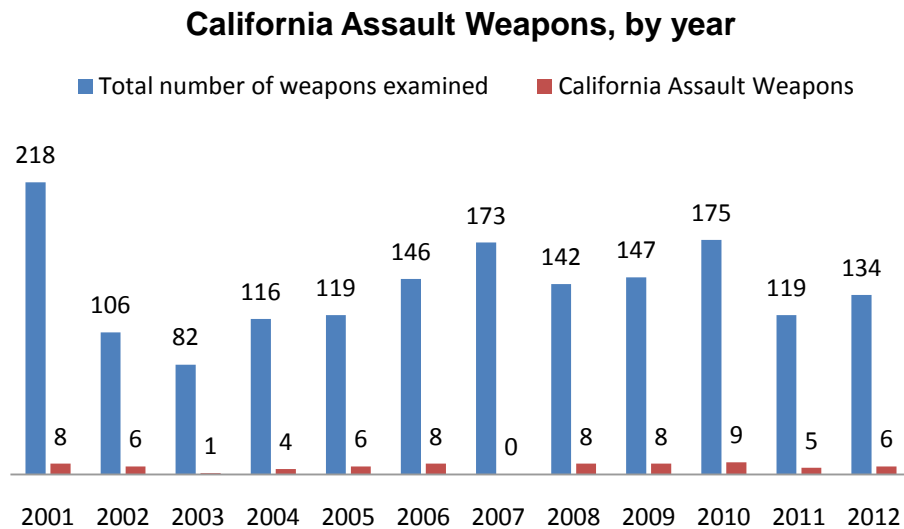


Figure 7