

Criminal Justice Data Brief

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Firearm Registrations in Hawaii, 2005

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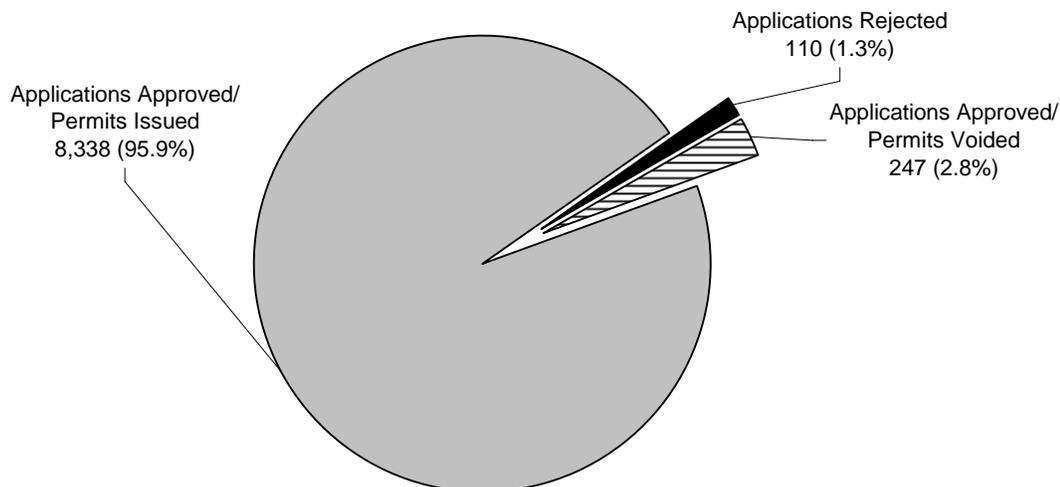
Hawaii Revised Statutes §134-14 requires the county police departments to provide to the Department of the Attorney General a monthly report of firearm registration activity. The data from these reports were compiled in order to provide the statistics presented herein for Calendar Year 2005. This is the sixth annual publication of *Firearm Registrations in Hawaii*.

Permit Applications Processed, Issued, Voided, and Rejected

A total of 8,695 personal/private firearm permit applications were processed statewide during 2005, marking a 27.1% increase from the 6,792 applications processed in 2004 and setting a record high tally since the initiation of statistics reporting in 2000. Of the applications processed in 2005, a record high rate of 95.9% were approved and resulted in issued permits; 2.8% were approved but subsequently voided after the applicants failed to return for their permits within a specified time period; and a record low rate of 1.3% were rejected due to one or more disqualifying factors. Figure 1 reveals additional information. Rejections are described in greater detail throughout this report.

**Figure 1: Firearm Permit Application Outcomes,
State of Hawaii, 2005**

(N = 8,695 Total Applications Processed)



Registrations and Importations

The 8,338 permits issued in 2005 cover a record high total of 17,982 firearms registered (an average of 14,666 firearms per year were registered during the 2000-2004 period). Just under half (8,563, or 47.6%) of the firearms registered during 2005 were imported from out-of-state, with the remainder (9,419, or 52.4%) accounted for by in-state transfers (i.e., firearms that were already in Hawaii). Although there is no way to track the number of firearms that permanently leave the state, independent estimates from the Department of the Attorney General and the City & County of Honolulu Police Department place the total number of privately owned firearms in Hawaii at approximately one million.

Permits and Registrations by Firearm Type

In the State of Hawaii, annual permits are issued in order to acquire an unlimited number of longarms (rifles or shotguns), while one-time permits are issued to acquire specific handguns. By firearm type, over half (4,489, or 53.8%) of the total permits issued during 2005 were handgun permits, while 3,849 (46.2%) were permits to acquire longarms. This is the first reporting year in which more handgun permits than longarm permits were issued. The tally of handgun permits is perennially confounded, however, as two of the county police departments issue a single permit listing all handguns that will be acquired simultaneously from the same source (i.e., one permit per transaction, per HRS §134-2(e)), while the other two departments issue one permit per handgun even if they are acquired in the same transaction.

Longarms accounted for 57.5% (10,332) of all firearms registered in 2005. Broken out further, rifles and shotguns comprised 42.7% (7,687) and 14.8% (2,645) of total registrations, respectively. The remaining 42.5% (7,650) of registered firearms were handguns.

County Comparisons for 2005 and Registration Trends

Table 1 shows the distribution of firearm registration activity during 2005 across the four counties and for the State of Hawaii in sum.

Table 1: Firearm Registration Activity, State of Hawaii and Counties, 2005

	C&C of Honolulu	Hawaii County	Maui County	Kauai County	State Total
Applications Processed	5,833	1,389	867	606	8,695
Applications Approved/ Permits Issued	5,616	1,316	801	605	8,338
Applications Approved/ Permits Voided	203	17	27	0	247
Applications Rejected	14	56	39	1	110
Rejection Rate	0.2%	4.0%	4.5%	0.2%	1.3%
Firearms Registered	11,307	3,382	1,889	1,404	17,982
Firearms Imported	5,580	1,615	935	433	8,563

As compared to Hawaii's resident population distribution, firearm registration activity occurred disproportionately across the four counties during 2005 (see Figure 2). (If the counties' registration activity occurred proportionately to their respective population sizes, then the three bars depicted for each county in Figure 2 would be of equal height and value.)

Based on its population size, 7% fewer permit applications were processed in the City & County of Honolulu than would be expected, and 82% fewer rejections were reported. Hawaii County recorded a 23% larger-than-expected share of processed applications and a 392% larger portion of rejections. Maui County processed applications proportionately to its population size, but its share of rejections was 318% larger than expected. Kauai County processed 40% more applications and reported 80% fewer rejections than would be anticipated based on its population size.

A possible explanation for the county-level disparities in rejection rates (also see Figure 3, next page) is that the police departments vary in their use of interpretation and discretion when determining if certain permit applications should be rejected based on suspected, investigated, and/or alleged prior legal transgressions that did not involve criminal convictions, and in determining what does or does not constitute a "crime of violence" (e.g., disorderly conduct) or "mental health treatment." (See the discussion on pages 5-6 relating to court-ordered alcohol abuse assessments associated with convictions for "driving under the influence.") It has also been suggested by police personnel that changes in policies and procedures pertaining to rejections are sometimes related to the assignment of new Records Division supervisors.

Figure 2: County Distribution of Permit Applications Processed and Rejected (2005) versus Resident Population Distribution (2004)

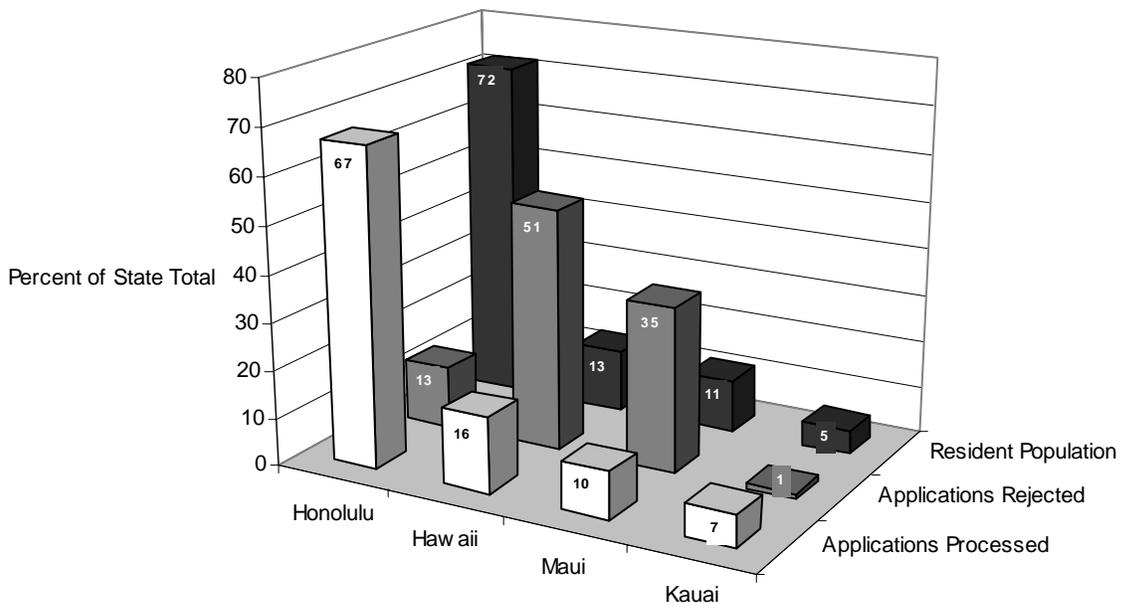
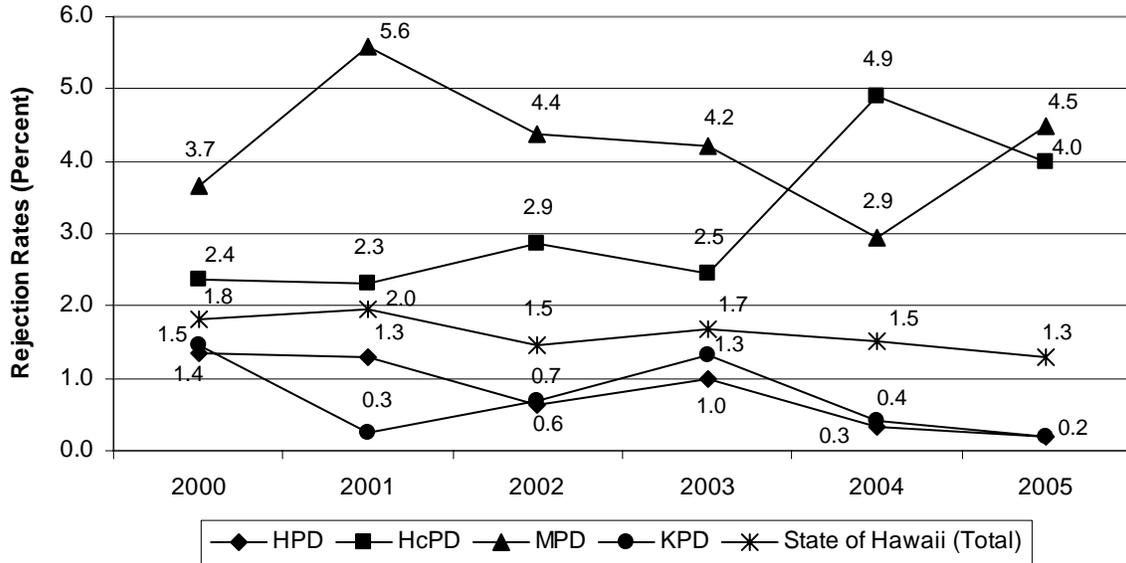
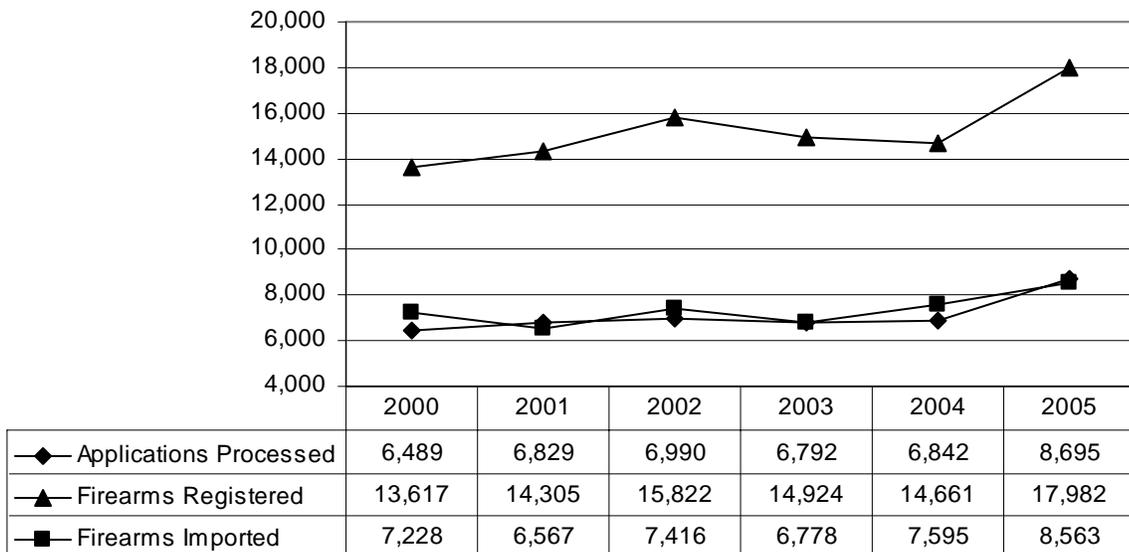


Figure 3: Firearm Permit Application Rejection Rates, State of Hawaii and Counties, 2000-2005



Firearm registration activity increased over the six-year period in which these data have been systematically compiled and reported (see Figure 4). From 2000 through 2005, the number of permit applications processed climbed 34.0%, the number of firearms registered increased 32.1%, and the number of firearms imported rose 18.5%. Net increases over this period, including the particularly sizable increases in 2005, were reported by all four counties.

Figure 4: Firearm Registration Trends, State of Hawaii, 2000-2005



Permit Application Rejections

As noted earlier, 1.3% (110) of all permit applications in Hawaii during 2005 were rejected for cause. Hawaii's 2005 rejection rate is 27.8% (0.5 percentage points) below the 1.8% figure reported for all state and local agencies conducting background checks for firearm permits and transfers in 2004 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005). That Hawaii's rejection rate is consistently lower than the most recent national figure is especially remarkable when the comparatively exhaustive background check procedures and extensive list of disqualifying factors used in the State of Hawaii are taken into consideration.

The vast majority of rejections in Hawaii during 2005 were for longarm (91, or 82.7%) rather than handgun (19, or 17.3%) permit applications. Following a trend since this annual report was first published, longarm permit applications in 2005 were rejected at a rate that is several times higher than the rejection rate for handgun permit applications (2.2% for longarm permit applications versus 0.4% for handgun permit applications).

Approximately two-fifths (43, or 39.1%) of the rejections in 2005 were due to applicants' prior criminal convictions, while just over one-fifth (24, or 21.8%) were due to pending criminal cases. The remaining two-fifths (43, or 39.1%) of rejections in 2005 were not based on the criminal histories of the applicants.

It is a misdemeanor in the State of Hawaii to provide falsified information on firearm permit applications, unless the falsified information pertains to criminal or mental health histories, in which case it is a felony offense (HRS §134-17). In 2005, falsified criminal and/or mental health information was provided in exactly half (55) of the 110 rejection cases; falsified information pertaining to anything *other than* criminal or mental health histories was provided in 6.4% (7) of the cases; falsified information pertaining to both criminal or mental health histories *and* non-criminal/mental health histories was provided in 0.9% (1) of the cases; and no falsified information was provided in 42.7% (47) of the cases.

Table 2 presents broad categorical data on the reasons for rejected permit applications.

Table 2: Reasons for Rejected Firearm Permit Applications, State of Hawaii, 2005

	Number	Percent*
Mental Health Issues/Treatment	44	40.0
"Other" Offense	39	35.5
Domestic Violence Offense	16	14.5
Other (e.g., non-U.S. citizen)	10	9.1
Drug Offense	5	4.5
Disqualifying Juvenile Offense	2	1.8
Temporary Restraining/Protective Order	2	1.8

* Due to multiple disqualifying factors for some applicants, figures do not total 100%.

Rejections for mental health issues or treatment, which annually comprise the largest portion of rejections, can be satisfactorily resolved with a doctor's note stating that the applicant is "no longer adversely affected." While an original rejection cannot be overturned, a new application may be submitted and the appropriate permit will be issued. It is unknown how many applicants who are initially rejected for mental health reasons successfully reapply for permits.

Table 3 provides a breakdown of data entered into a description field for each rejection. It is important to note that some of the police departments interpret a court-ordered alcohol abuse assessment following a conviction for “driving under the influence” (DUI) as a form of mental health treatment and thus grounds for rejection (a DUI conviction is not in and of itself a disqualifying factor). These cases comprise the largest single proportion of rejections each year (12.7% in 2005).

Table 3: Descriptions of Firearm Permit Application Rejections, State of Hawaii, 2005

N=110 Rejections	Number	Percent*
"no convictions, but a pattern of crimes of violence" (?)	1	0.9
"Shoplifters' Alternative" (?) + counseling	1	0.9
abuse of family/household member	10	9.1
abuse of family/household member + current restraining order + DUI/treatment	1	0.9
abuse of family/household member + DUI/treatment	1	0.9
abuse of family/household member + unauthorized entry into a motor vehicle	2	1.8
acquitted by reason of insanity	1	0.9
assault	10	9.1
assault + mental health (unspecified)	1	0.9
assault x 2	2	1.8
battery	1	0.9
burglary	1	0.9
committed to psychiatric facility	1	0.9
criminal property damage + harassment + disorderly conduct	1	0.9
crime of violence (unspecified)	3	2.7
crime of violence (unspecified) + mental health (unspecified)	1	0.9
criminal property damage	1	0.9
current protective order	1	0.9
domestic violence (unspecified)	2	1.8
drug offense (unspecified)	2	1.8
drug sales	3	2.7
DUI/treatment	14	12.7
felony (unspecified)	5	4.5
harassment	2	1.8
insurance fraud	1	0.9
juvenile offense (unspecified)	1	0.9
medical marijuana patient	1	0.9
mental health (unspecified)	6	5.5
mental health treatment	2	1.8
not a U.S. citizen	1	0.9
on medication for mental illness	2	1.8
pending penal summons	1	0.9
possession of a prohibited weapon + reckless endangering	1	0.9
reckless endangering	1	0.9
resides with unqualified person	4	3.6
resisting arrest	2	1.8
sexual assault + DUI/treatment	1	0.9
substance abuse treatment	2	1.8
suicidal ideation	2	1.8
suicide attempt	3	2.7
suicide attempt + resides with unqualified person	1	0.9
terroristic threatening	2	1.8
theft	2	1.8
theft + abuse of family/household member	1	0.9
theft + forgery	1	0.9
theft 2 (as a juvenile)	1	0.9
violated protective order	1	0.9
violated protective order + suicide attempt	1	0.9
weapons offense	1	0.9

*Due to rounding, figures do not total 100%.

Confiscations

Although a small number of prohibited firearms (e.g., machineguns, “sawed-off” shotguns) are typically confiscated by registration personnel each year, none were reported for 2005.

Licenses to Carry

Hawaii’s county police departments also process license applications for the open and/or concealed carry of firearms in public. Statewide in 2005, 235 employees of private security firms were issued carry licenses, and none were rejected. Six private citizens in the City & County of Honolulu applied for a concealed carry license and were denied at the sole discretion of the police chief.

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared with input and assistance from the county police departments’ firearm registration personnel: **Debra Agena**, Records Clerk, Maui County Police Department; **Sgt. Michael Arnone** and the firearm registration section, in particular **Suzy Yamasaki**, Records Clerk, of the Records and Identification Division, City & County of Honolulu Police Department; **Sharen Chaves**, Records Clerk, Hawaii County Police Department; and **Emily Fabro**, Firearms Clerk, Kauai County Police Department. As the volume of registration activity documented in this report demonstrates, these dedicated professionals work hard to serve the citizens of Hawaii.

Reference

Bureau of Justice Statistics (October, 2005). *Background checks for firearms transfers, 2004*. Publication NCJ 210117. U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs.

*This report is available in PDF format from the Crime
Prevention & Justice Assistance Division’s web site:*
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