

# Criminal Justice Data Brief

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## *Firearm Registrations in Hawaii, 2006*

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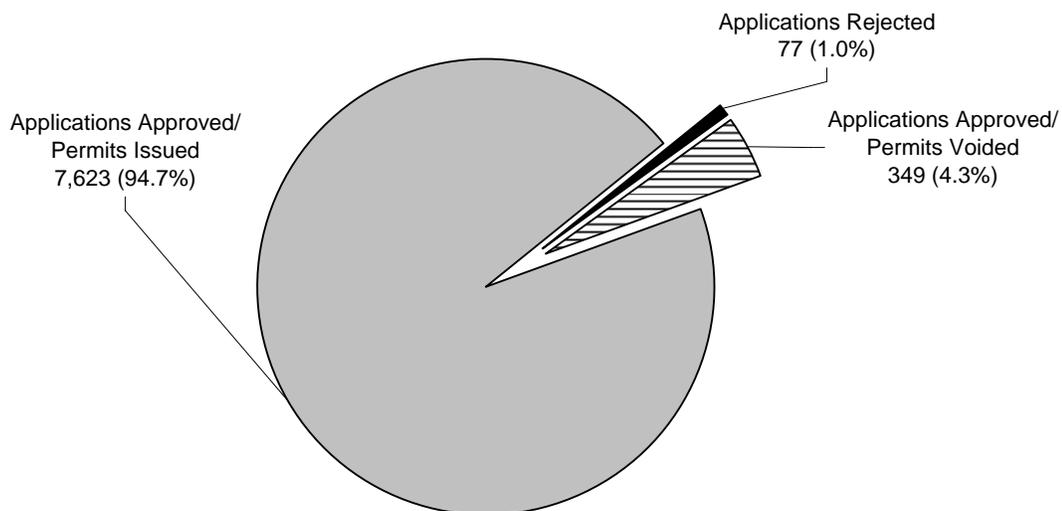
Hawaii Revised Statutes §134-14 requires the county police departments to provide to the Department of the Attorney General a monthly report of firearm registration activity. The data from these reports were compiled in order to provide the statistics presented herein for Calendar Year 2006. This is the seventh annual publication of *Firearm Registrations in Hawaii*.

### **Permit Applications Processed, Issued, Voided, and Rejected**

A total of 8,049 personal/private firearm permit applications were processed statewide during 2006, marking a 7.4% decrease from the record high of 8,695 applications processed in 2005. Of the applications processed in 2006, 94.7% were approved and resulted in issued permits; a record high of 4.3% were approved but subsequently voided after the applicants failed to return for their permits within a specified time period; and a record low of 1.0% 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, 2006**

(N = 8,049 Total Applications Processed)



## Registrations and Importations

The 7,623 permits issued statewide in 2006 cover a record high total of 19,971 firearms registered. Just under half (9,830, or 49.2%) of the firearms registered during 2006 were imported from out-of-state, with the remainder (10,141, or 50.8%) 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 roughly 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, a record high of 56.5% (4,310) of the total permits issued during 2006 were to acquire longarms, while a record low of 43.5% (3,313) were handgun permits. The tally of handgun permits is perennially confounded, however, as some 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 departments issue one permit per handgun even if they are acquired in the same transaction.

Longarms accounted for a record high of 59.6% (11,902) of all firearms registered in 2006. Broken out further, rifles and shotguns comprised 45.8% (9,137) and 13.8% (2,765) of total registrations, respectively. The remaining, record low 40.4% (8,069) of registered firearms were handguns.

## County Comparisons and Registration Trends

Table 1 shows the distribution of firearm registration activity during 2006 across the four counties and for the State of Hawaii overall.

**Table 1: Firearm Registration Activity, State of Hawaii and Counties, 2006**

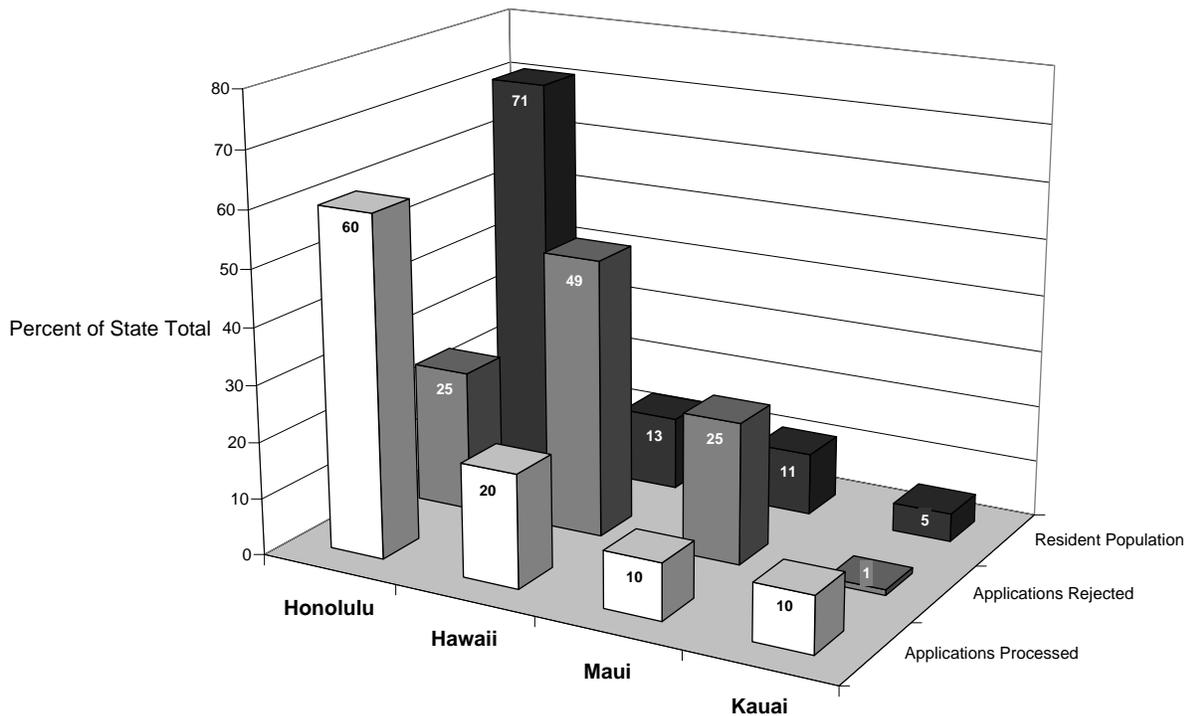
	C&C of Honolulu	Hawaii County	Maui County	Kauai County	State Total
Applications Processed	4,855	1,595	825	774	<b>8,049</b>
Applications Approved/ Permits Issued	4,545	1,517	790	771	<b>7,623</b>
Applications Approved/ Permits Voided	291	40	16	2	<b>349</b>
Applications Rejected	19	38	19	1	<b>77</b>
Rejection Rate	0.4%	2.4%	2.3%	0.1%	<b>1.0%</b>
Firearms Registered	12,452	3,976	2,098	1,445	<b>19,971</b>
Firearms Imported	6,388	1,768	993	681	<b>9,830</b>

As compared to Hawaii's resident population distribution, firearm registration activity occurred disproportionately across the four counties during 2006 (see Figure 2). (If the counties' registration activity occurred proportionally to their respective population sizes, then the three bars depicted for each county in Figure 2 would be of equal height and value.)

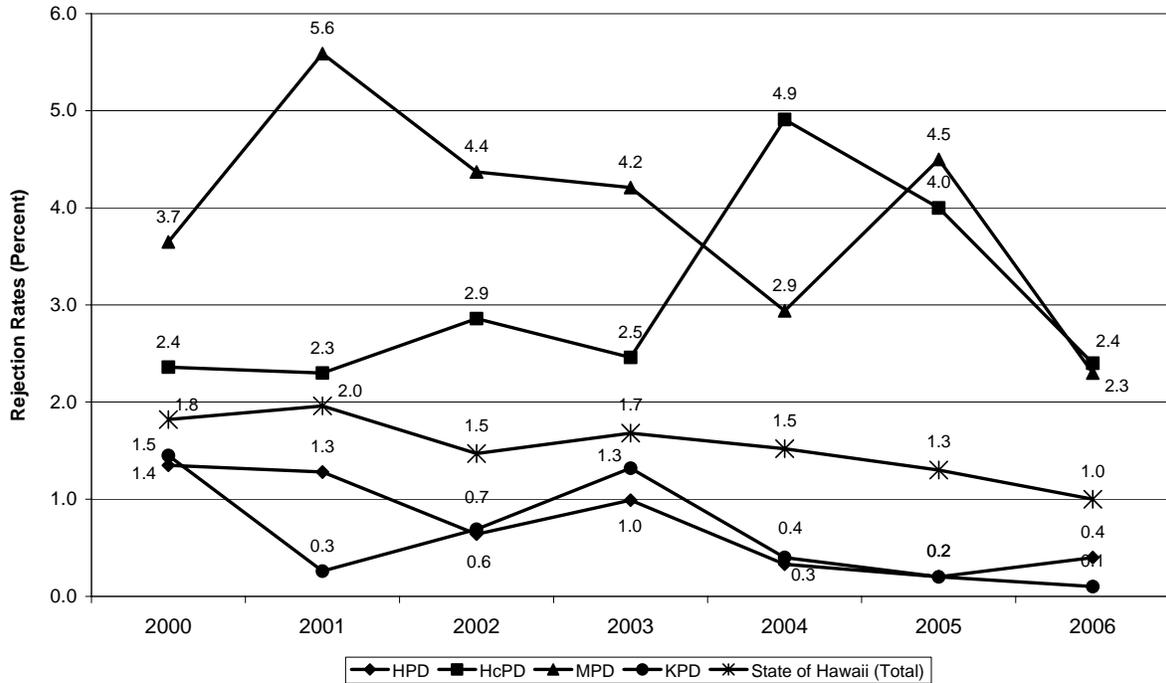
Based on its population size, 15% fewer permit applications were processed in the City & County of Honolulu during 2006 than would be expected, and 65% fewer rejections were reported. Hawaii County recorded a 54% larger-than-expected share of processed applications and a 377% larger portion of rejections. Maui County processed applications in rough proportion to its population size, but its share of rejections was 227% larger than expected. Kauai County processed 200% 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 second footnote below Table 3 on page 6). 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 versus Resident Population Distribution, 2006**

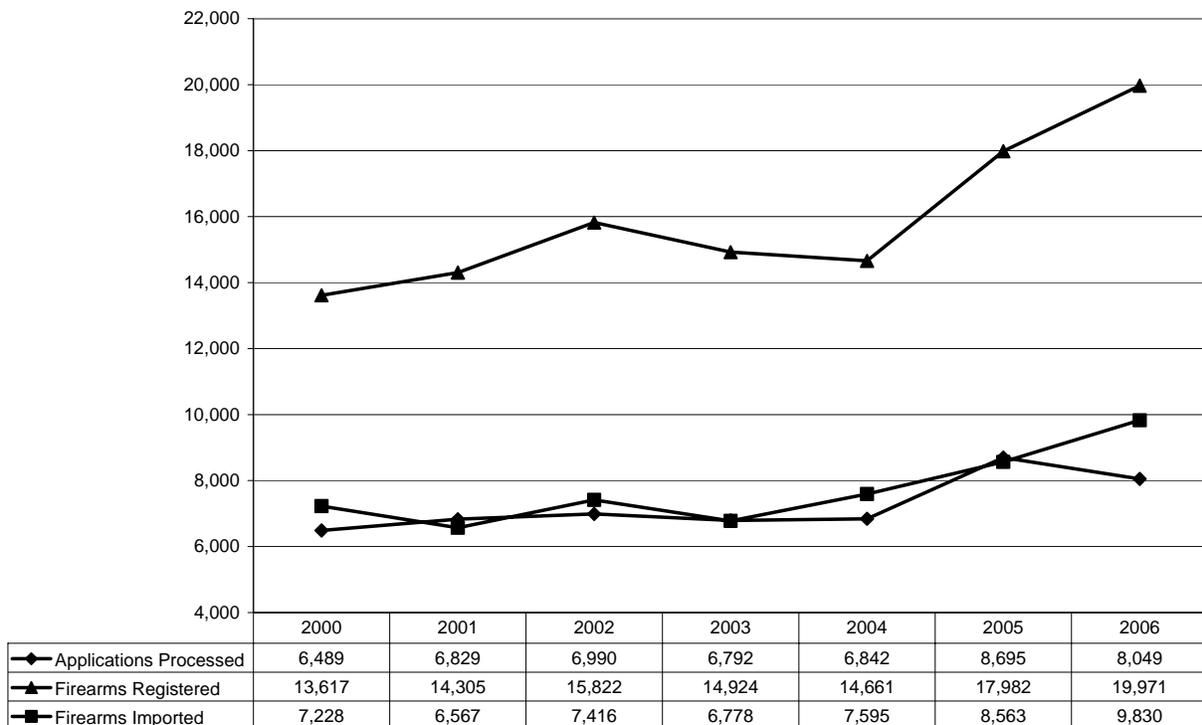


**Figure 3: Firearm Permit Application Rejection Rates, State of Hawaii and Counties, 2000-2006**



Firearm registration activity has increased considerably over the seven-year period in which these data have been systematically compiled and reported (see Figure 4). From 2000 through 2006, the number of permit applications processed increased 24.0%, the number of firearms registered surged 46.7%, and the number of firearms imported rose 36.0%. Net increases over this period, including the especially large increases in 2005 and 2006, were reported by all four counties.

**Figure 4: Firearm Registration Trends, State of Hawaii, 2000-2006**



## Permit Application Rejections

As noted earlier, 1.0% (77) of all permit applications in Hawaii during 2006 were rejected for cause. Hawaii's 2006 rejection rate is 58.3% (1.4 percentage points) below the 2.4% rate reported for all state and local agencies conducting background checks for firearm permits and transfers in 2005 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006). That Hawaii's rejection rate is perennially 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 2006 were for longarm (62, or 80.5%) rather than handgun (15, or 19.5%) permit applications. Following a trend since this annual report was first published, longarm permit applications in 2006 were rejected at a rate that is several times higher than the rejection rate for handgun permit applications (1.4% for longarm permit applications versus 0.4% for handgun permit applications).

Over half (42, or 54.5%) of the rejections in 2006 were due to applicants' prior criminal convictions, while almost one-fifth (14, or 18.2%) were due to pending criminal cases. The remaining 27.3% (21) of rejections in 2006 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 2006, falsified criminal and/or mental health information was provided in 53.2% (41) of the 77 rejection cases; falsified information pertaining to anything *other than* criminal or mental health histories was provided in 7.8% (6) of the cases; falsified information pertaining to both criminal or mental health histories *and* non-criminal/mental health histories was provided in 5.2% (4) of the cases; and no falsified information was provided in 33.8% (26) 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, 2006**

	Number	Percent*
"Other" Offense	35	45.5
Domestic Violence Offense	15	19.5
Mental Health Issues/Treatment**	12	15.6
Restraining/Protective Order	4	5.2
Other (e.g., non-U.S. citizen)	3	3.9
Drug Offense	3	3.9
Disqualifying Juvenile Offense	2	2.6

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

\*\* Rejections for mental health issues or treatment can be satisfactorily resolved with a verified 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.

**Table 3: Descriptions of Firearm Permit Application Rejections, State of Hawaii, 2006**

<b>N = 77 Rejections</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
abuse of family/household member	5	6.5
abuse of family/household member + theft	1	1.3
assault	8	10.4
assault + theft	1	1.3
burglary	7	9.1
burglary (as juvenile)	1	1.3
crime of violence (unspecified)	2	2.6
domestic violence (unspecified)	4	5.2
drug offense (unspecified felony)	1	1.3
DUI/treatment**	3	3.9
felony (unspecified)	2	2.6
firearm offense ("place to keep")	2	2.6
firearm offense (prohibited weapon)	1	1.3
fraud	1	1.3
harassment	4	5.2
lives in same household as a convicted felon	1	1.3
manslaughter	2	2.6
marijuana possession	1	1.3
mental health (unspecified)	2	2.6
mental health (unspecified) + no proof of U.S. citizenship	1	1.3
mental health treatment	5	6.5
missing person APB	1	1.3
restraining order (current)	5	6.5
restraining order violation	1	1.3
robbery (as juvenile)	1	1.3
sex offense (unspecified)	2	2.6
sexual assault	3	3.9
substance abuse treatment	1	1.3
terroristic threatening	5	6.5
theft	2	2.6
theft (as juvenile)	1	1.3

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

\*\* Prior to a legal opinion issued by this Department in April 2006, some of the police departments interpreted 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 was not in and of itself a disqualifying factor). These cases historically comprised the largest single portion of rejections each year.

## 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 2006.

## Licenses to Carry Firearms

Hawaii’s county police departments also process license applications for the open and/or concealed carry of firearms in public. Statewide in 2006, 227 employees of private security firms were issued carry licenses, and two (0.9%) were rejected. One private citizen in Kauai County applied for a concealed carry license and was approved 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 their communities.

## Reference

Bureau of Justice Statistics (November, 2006). *Background checks for firearms transfers, 2005*. Publication NCJ 214256. 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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