

# Criminal Justice Data Brief

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## *Firearm Registrations in Hawaii, 2011*

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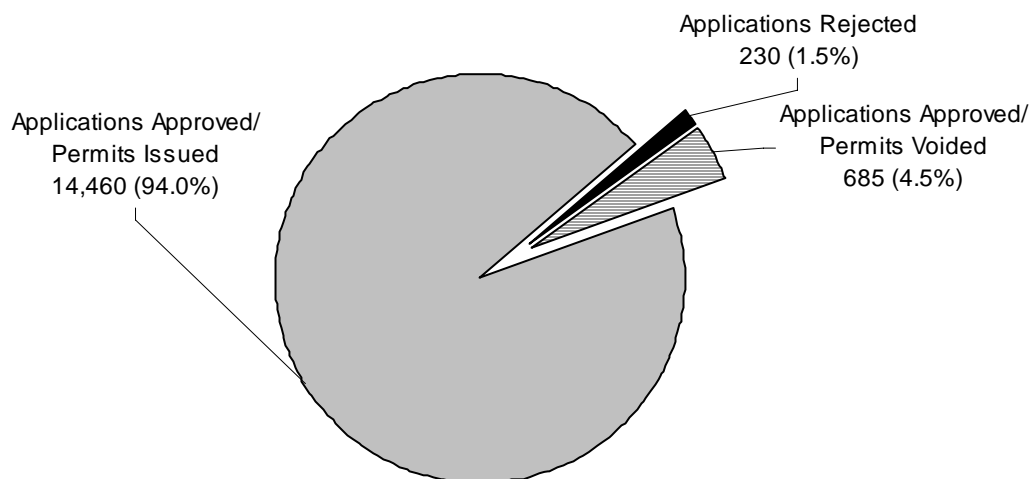
Hawaii Revised Statutes §134-14 requires the county police departments to provide to the Department of the Attorney General a monthly report of firearm registration activity. The data from these reports were compiled in order to provide the statistics presented herein for Calendar Year 2011. This is the twelfth annual publication of *Firearm Registrations in Hawaii*.

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

A record high total of 15,375 personal/private firearm permit applications were processed statewide during 2011, marking a substantial, 20.1% increase from the previous record high of 12,801 applications processed in 2010. Of the applications processed in 2011, 94.0% were approved and resulted in issued permits; 4.5% were approved but subsequently voided after the applicants failed to return for their permits within a specified time period; and 1.5% 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, 2011**

(N = 15,375 Total Applications Processed)



## Registrations and Importations

The 14,460 permits issued statewide in 2011 cover a record high total of 36,804 firearms registered, marking a 17.2% increase from the 31,390 firearms registered in 2010. Just under half (17,949, or 48.8%) of the firearms registered during 2011 were imported from out-of-state, with the remainder (18,855, or 51.2%) 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 made during the late-1990s by the Department of the Attorney General and the City & County of Honolulu Police Department placed 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 and shotguns), while one-time permits are issued to acquire specific handguns. By firearm type, 57.4% (8,295) of the 14,460 total permits issued during 2011 were to acquire longarms, while 42.6% (6,165) 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 58.7% (21,589) of all firearms registered in 2011 (36,804). Broken out further, rifles and shotguns comprised 45.1% (16,582) and 13.6% (5,007) of total registrations, respectively. The remaining 41.3% (15,215) of registered firearms were handguns.

## County Comparisons and Registration Trends

Table 1 shows the distribution of firearm registration activity during 2011 across the four counties and for the State of Hawaii overall.

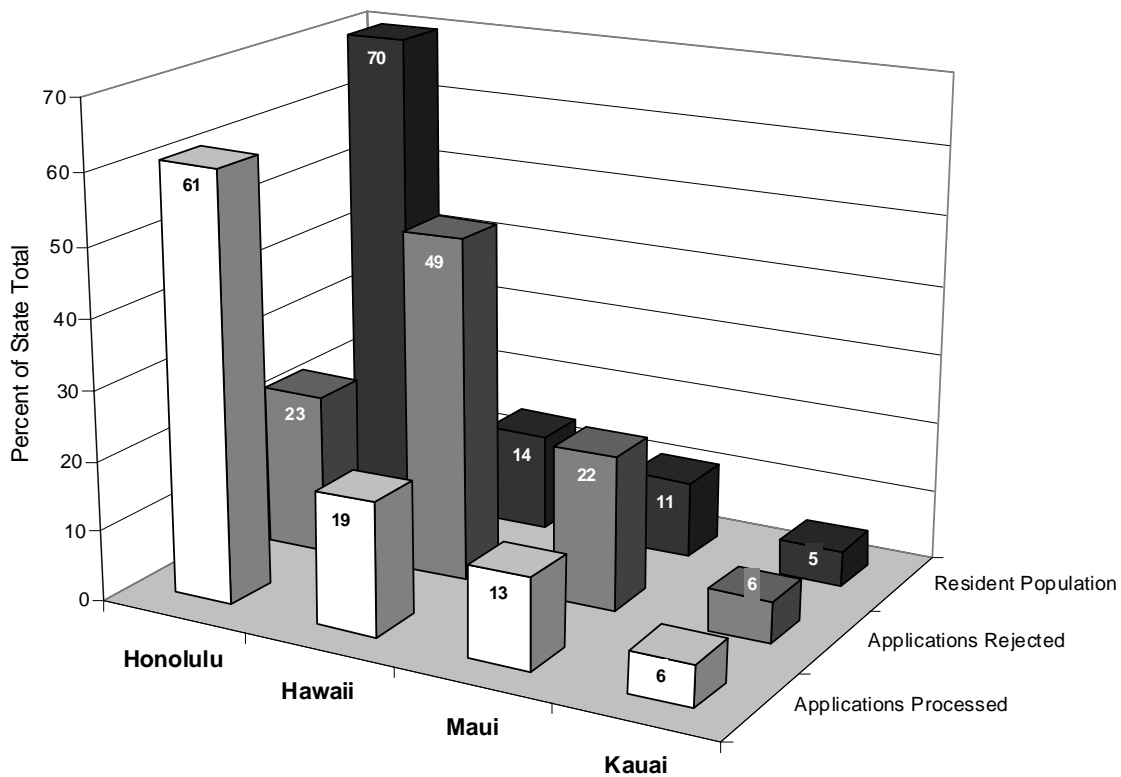
**Table 1: Firearm Registration Activity, State of Hawaii and Counties, 2011**

|  | C&C of Honolulu | Hawaii County | Maui County | Kauai County | State Total   |
|--|-----------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| Applications Processed                   | 9,452           | 2,975         | 1,965       | 983          | <b>15,375</b> |
| Applications Approved/<br>Permits Issued | 8,953           | 2,777         | 1,842       | 888          | <b>14,460</b> |
| Applications Approved/<br>Permits Voided | 445             | 85            | 73          | 82           | <b>685</b>    |
| Applications Rejected                    | 54              | 113           | 50          | 13           | <b>230</b>    |
| Rejection Rate                           | 0.6%            | 3.8%          | 2.5%        | 1.3%         | <b>1.5%</b>   |
| Firearms Registered                      | 23,470          | 6,603         | 4,569       | 2,099        | <b>36,804</b> |
| Firearms Imported                        | 11,869          | 2,990         | 2,108       | 982          | <b>17,949</b> |

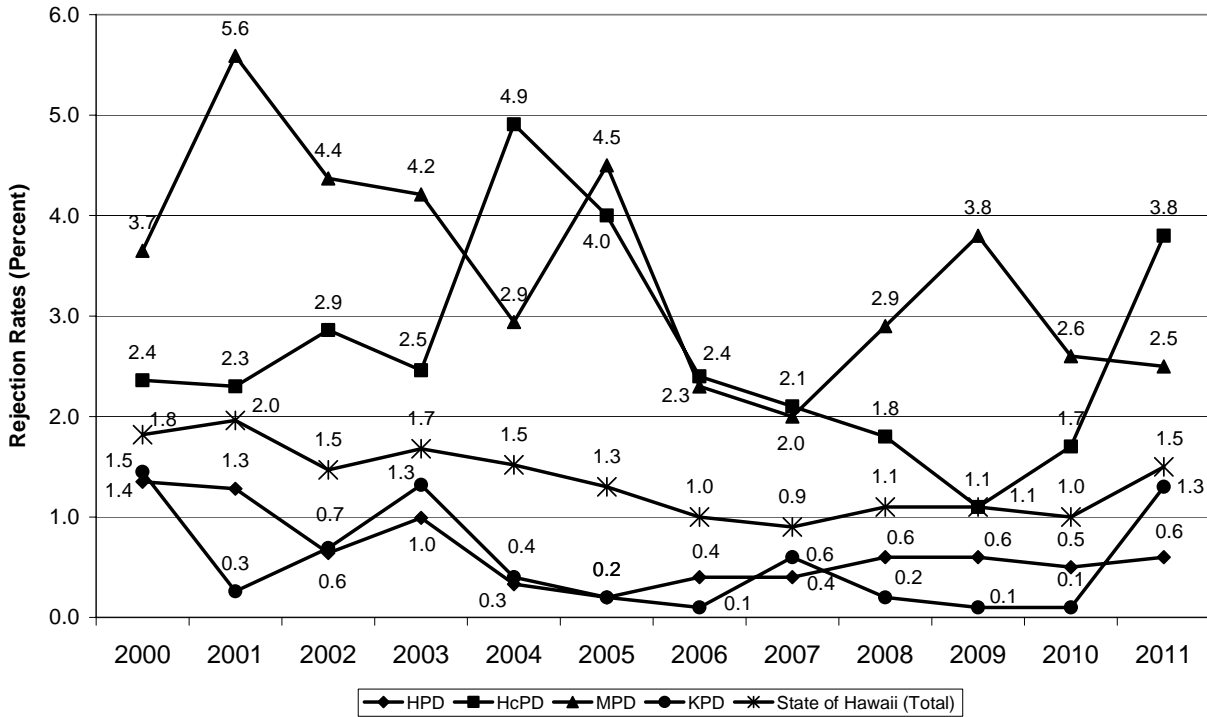
As compared to Hawaii's resident population distribution, firearm registration activity occurred disproportionately across the four counties during 2011 (see Figure 2). (If the counties' registration activity occurred in equal proportion to their respective population sizes, then the three bars depicted for each county in Figure 2 would be of equal height and value.)

Based on its population size, 13% fewer permit applications were processed in the City & County of Honolulu during 2011 than would be expected, and 67% fewer rejections were reported. Hawaii County recorded a 36% greater-than-expected share of processed applications and a 250% larger portion of rejections. Maui County processed 18% more applications and rejected 100% more applications than expected. Kauai County processed and rejected permit applications at rates that are roughly commensurate with its share of the State's resident population.

**Figure 2: County Distribution of Permit Applications Processed and Rejected versus Resident Population Distribution, 2011**

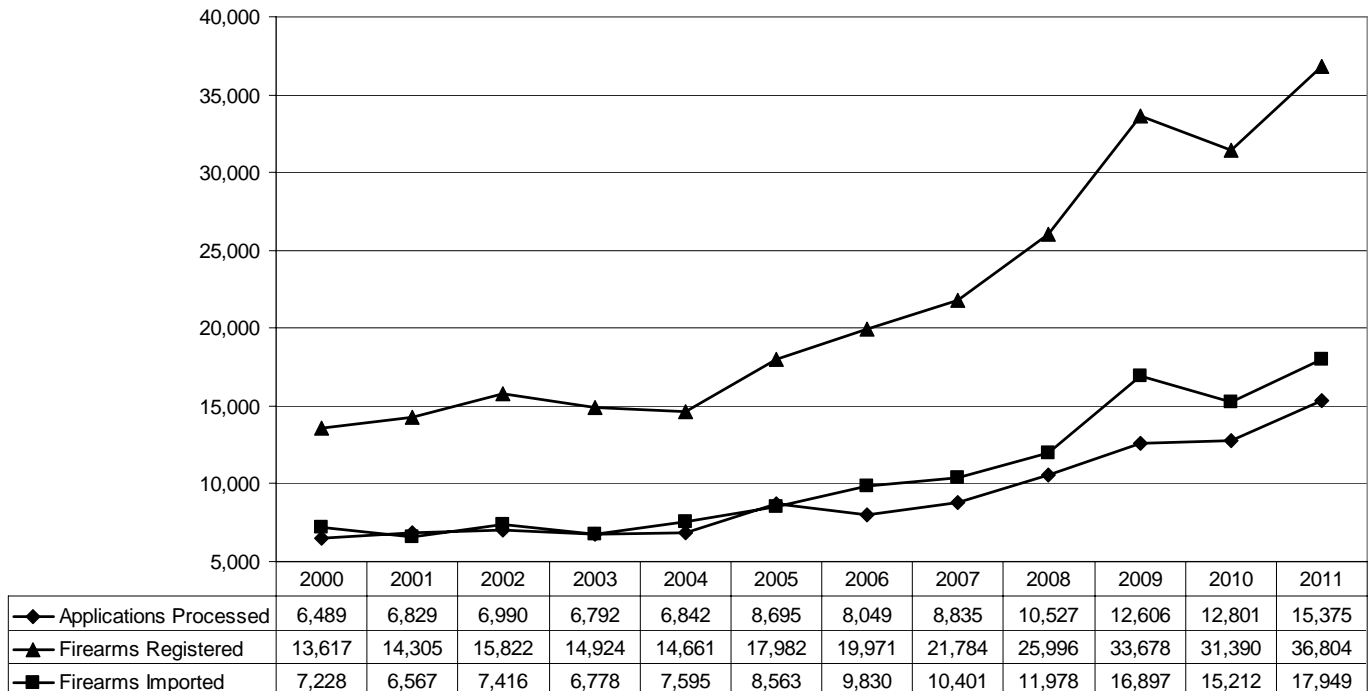


**Figure 3: Firearm Permit Application Rejection Rates, State of Hawaii and Counties, 2000-2011**



Firearm registration activity increased dramatically over the course of the twelve years for which these data have been systematically compiled and reported (see Figure 4). From 2000 through 2011, the number of permit applications processed annually climbed 136.9%, the number of firearms registered soared 170.3%, and the number of firearms imported surged 148.3%.

**Figure 4: Firearm Registration Trends, State of Hawaii, 2000-2011**



## Permit Application Rejections

As noted earlier, 1.5% (230) of all permit applications in Hawaii during 2011 were rejected for cause. Hawaii's 2011 rejection rate is 16.7% (0.3 percentage points) below the 1.8% rate reported for all state and local agencies conducting background checks for firearm permits and transfers in 2009 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010; the most current national data available).

The vast majority of rejections in Hawaii during 2011 were for longarm (204, or 88.7%) rather than handgun (26, or 11.3%) permit applications. Following a trend since this annual report was first published, longarm permit applications in 2011 were rejected at a rate that is several times higher than the rejection rate for handgun permit applications (2.3% for longarm permit applications versus 0.4% for handgun permit applications).

Almost half (112, or 48.7%) of the rejections in 2011 were due to applicants' prior criminal convictions, while 11.3% (26) were due to pending charges. The remaining 40.0% (66) of rejections in 2010 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 2011, falsified criminal and/or mental health information was provided in 74.8% (172) of the 230 rejection cases; falsified information pertaining to anything other than criminal or mental health histories was provided in 3.5% (8) of the cases; both types of falsified information were provided in 0.4% (1) of the cases; and no falsified information was provided in 21.3% (49) 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, 2011**

|                                  | #  | %*   |
|----------------------------------|----|------|
| "Other" Offense                  | 84 | 36.5 |
| Domestic Violence Offense        | 47 | 20.4 |
| Mental Health Issues/Treatment** | 46 | 20.0 |
| Drug Offense                     | 24 | 10.4 |
| Other (e.g., non-U.S. citizen)   | 27 | 11.7 |
| Restraining/Protective Order     | 9  | 3.9  |
| Disqualifying Juvenile Offense   | 5  | 2.2  |

\* Figures do not total 100% due to multiple rejection reasons for some applicants.

\*\* 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, 2011**

| [N = 230 Rejections]   | #  | %*   |
|--|----|------|
| abuse of family/household member                               | 30 | 13.0 |
| abuse of family/household member + burglaries                  | 1  | .4   |
| abuse of family/household member + mental health issue         | 1  | .4   |
| abuse of family/household member + substance abuse treatment   | 2  | .9   |
| admitted use of marijuana                                      | 1  | .4   |
| alcohol abuse counseling                                       | 7  | 3.0  |
| alcohol abuse counseling + medical marijuana patient           | 1  | .4   |
| applicant claimed to be applying "under duress"                | 1  | .4   |
| assault  | 35 | 15.2 |
| assault + abuse of family/household member                     | 3  | 1.3  |
| assault + mental health issue                                  | 1  | .4   |
| assault on police officer                                      | 1  | .4   |
| burglary   | 1  | .4   |
| crime of violence (unspecified)                                | 2  | .9   |
| criminal property damage                                       | 2  | .9   |
| depression   | 1  | .4   |
| did not sign background check waiver                           | 1  | .4   |
| disorderly conduct   | 11 | 4.8  |
| disqualifying juvenile offense(s)                              | 5  | 2.1  |
| drug offense   | 22 | 10.1 |
| drug offense + medical marijuana patient                       | 1  | .4   |
| DUI pending  | 1  | .4   |
| embezzlement + possession of stolen property and burglar tools | 1  | .4   |
| felony (unspecified)   | 6  | 2.6  |
| harassment   | 8  | 3.5  |
| harassment + mental health treatment                           | 1  | .4   |
| identity theft   | 1  | .4   |
| medical clearance needed                                       | 2  | .9   |
| medical marijuana patient                                      | 1  | .4   |
| mental health issue (unspecified)                              | 3  | 1.3  |
| mental health treatment  | 25 | 10.9 |
| motor vehicle theft  | 2  | .9   |
| murder arrest unresolved from 1982                             | 1  | .4   |
| no residence   | 1  | .4   |
| not a U.S. citizen   | 2  | .9   |
| resides with disqualified person                               | 8  | 3.5  |
| restraining order  | 8  | 3.5  |
| restraining order violation                                    | 2  | .9   |
| sexual assault   | 2  | .9   |
| statutory rape   | 1  | .4   |
| suicide attempt(s)   | 4  | 1.7  |
| terroristic threatening  | 1  | .4   |
| theft  | 4  | 1.7  |
| violent offense (unspecified)                                  | 2  | .9   |
| warrant  | 9  | 3.9  |
| weapons offense  | 3  | 1.3  |

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

Note: 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 drunken driving conviction as a form of "mental health treatment" and thus grounds for rejection. These cases historically accounted for the largest portion of rejections each year.

## Confiscations

During 2011, the City & County of Honolulu Police Department firearm registration section confiscated seven prohibited firearms, and the Maui County Police Department confiscated one. All eight firearms were “assault pistols” as defined and prohibited by State law.

## 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 2011, 201 employees of private security firms were issued carry licenses, and none were rejected. Eight private citizens applied for a concealed carry license in the City & County of Honolulu and were rejected for not meeting unstated criteria established by the chief of police.

## Acknowledgements

This report was prepared with input and assistance from the county police departments’ firearm registration personnel: **Emily Fabro**, Firearms Clerk, Kauai County Police Department; **Debra Agena**, Records Clerk, Maui County Police Department; the firearm registration section, in particular **Suzy Yamasaki**, Records Clerk, City & County of Honolulu Police Department; and **Arlene Young**, Records Clerk, Hawaii 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 (October 2010). *Background checks for firearms transfers, 2009*. <<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/html/bcft/2009/bcft09st.pdf>>. 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:*  
**[hawaii.gov/ag/cpja](http://hawaii.gov/ag/cpja)**