

Criminal Justice Data Brief

Department of the Attorney General

Crime Prevention & Justice Assistance Division

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Firearm Registrations in Hawaii, 2002

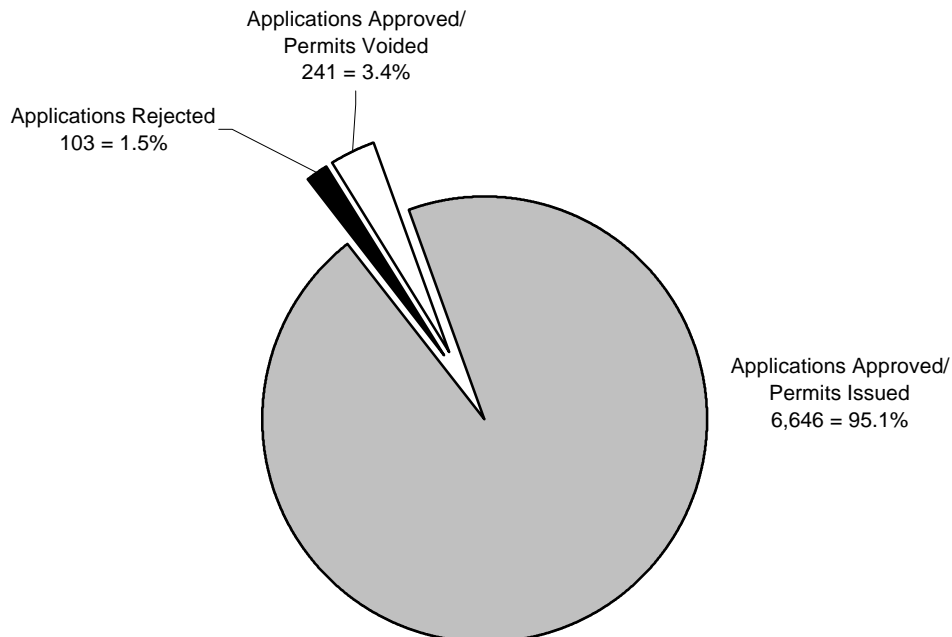
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Hawaii Revised Statutes §134-14 requires the county police departments to provide to the Department of the Attorney General a monthly report of firearm registration activity. These data were compiled in order to provide the statistics reported herein for Calendar Year 2002. This is the third annual publication of this report.

Permit Applications Processed, Issued, Voided, and Rejected

A total of 6,990 personal/private firearm permit applications were processed statewide during 2002, marking a 2.4% increase from the 6,829 applications processed in 2001. Of the applications processed in 2002, 95.1% (6,646) were approved and resulted in issued permits; 3.4% (241) were approved but subsequently voided after the applicants failed to return for their permits within a specified time period; and 1.5% (103) were rejected due to one or more disqualifying factors (rejections are described in detail beginning on page 4). The proportion of rejections fell by one-quarter in 2002, down from 2.0% reported for 2001.

Figure 1: Firearm Permit Application Outcomes, State of Hawaii, 2002



Registrations and Importations

The 6,646 permits issued in 2002 cover a total of 15,822 firearms registered. Roughly half (46.9%, or 7,416) of these firearms were imported from out of state, with the remainder accounted for by in-state transfers. Firearms may be imported to Hawaii by federally licensed dealers and collectors, state residents returning from travel, individuals who have relocated to Hawaii, or those who visit Hawaii for certain purposes (e.g., hunting, competition, filmmaking).

Permits and Registrations by Firearm Type

In 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 (54.9%, or 3,649) of the total permits issued during 2002 were annual longarm permits, while 45.1% (2,997) were permits to acquire handguns. The tally of handgun permits is confounded, however, as the City & County of Honolulu Police Department and Maui County Police Department issue a single permit listing all handguns that will be acquired simultaneously from the same source (i.e., in a single transaction), while the Hawaii County Police Department and Kauai County Police Department issue one permit per handgun regardless of the situation.

Longarms accounted for 57.4% (9,076) of all firearms registered in 2002. Broken out further, rifles and shotguns comprised 41.8% (6,616) and 15.5% (2,460) of total registrations, respectively; the remaining 42.6% (6,746) of registered firearms were handguns.

County Comparison

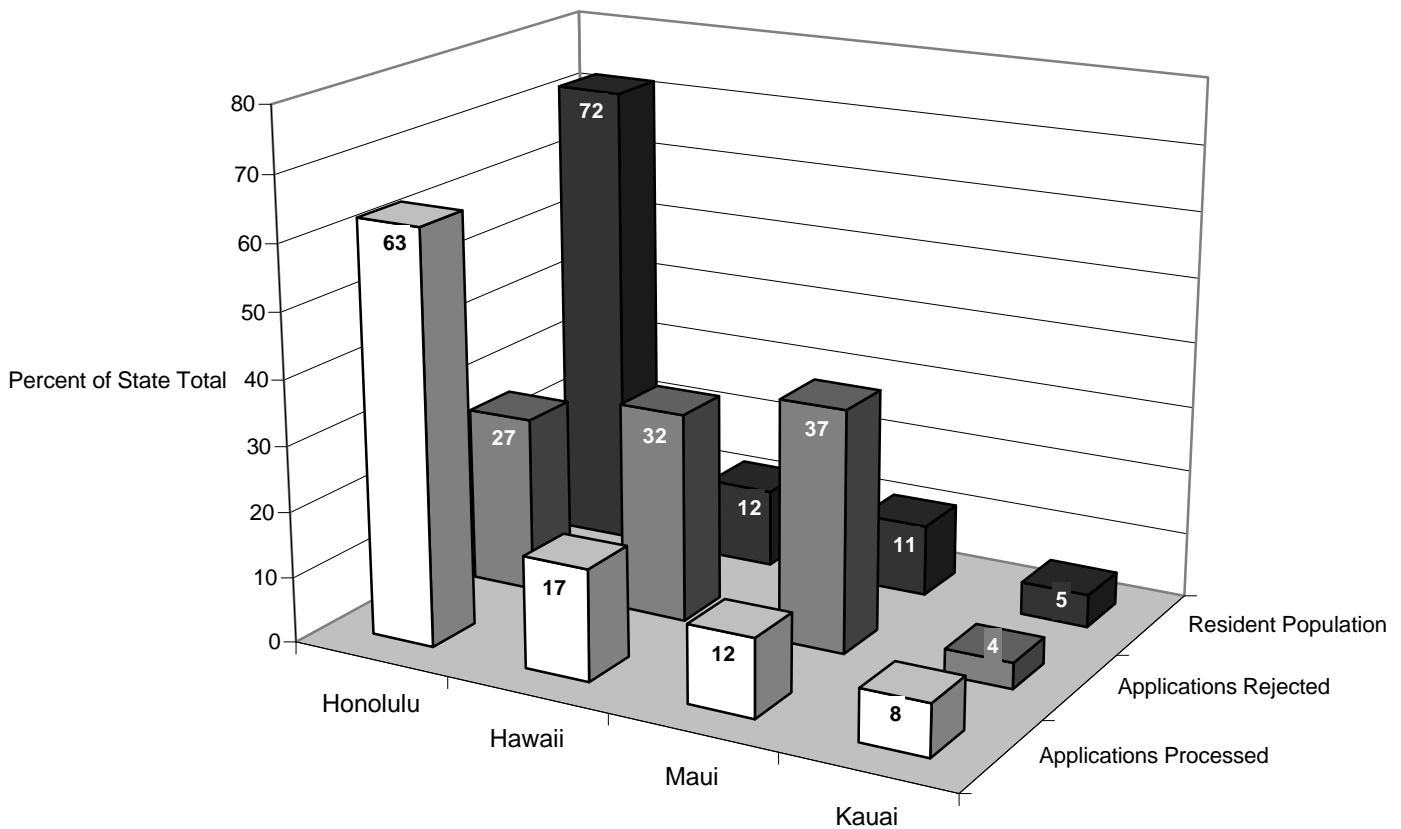
Table 1 shows the distribution of firearm registration activity during 2002 across the four counties and for the State of Hawaii.

Table 1: Firearm Registration Activity by County, State of Hawaii, 2002

	C&C of Honolulu	Hawaii County	Maui County	Kauai County	State Total
Applications Processed	4,383	1,155	870	582	6,990
Applications Approved/ Permits Issued	4,194	1,108	779	565	6,646
Applications Approved/ Permits Voided	161	14	53	13	241
Applications Rejected	28	33	38	4	103
Rejection Rate	0.6%	2.9%	4.4%	0.7%	1.5%
Firearms Registered	10,129	2,973	1,482	1,238	15,822
Firearms Imported	4,948	1,286	635	547	7,416

As compared to Hawaii’s resident population distribution, firearm registration activity occurred disproportionately across the four counties during 2002 (Figure 2). Based on its population size, 13% fewer permit applications were processed in the City & County of Honolulu than would be expected, and 64% fewer rejections were recorded. Hawaii County reported a 42% larger-than-expected share of processed applications and a 166% larger portion of rejections. Maui County processed applications proportionally to its population size, but its share of rejections was 236% larger than expected. Kauai County accounted for 60% more processed applications than anticipated, but rejected 20% fewer applications.

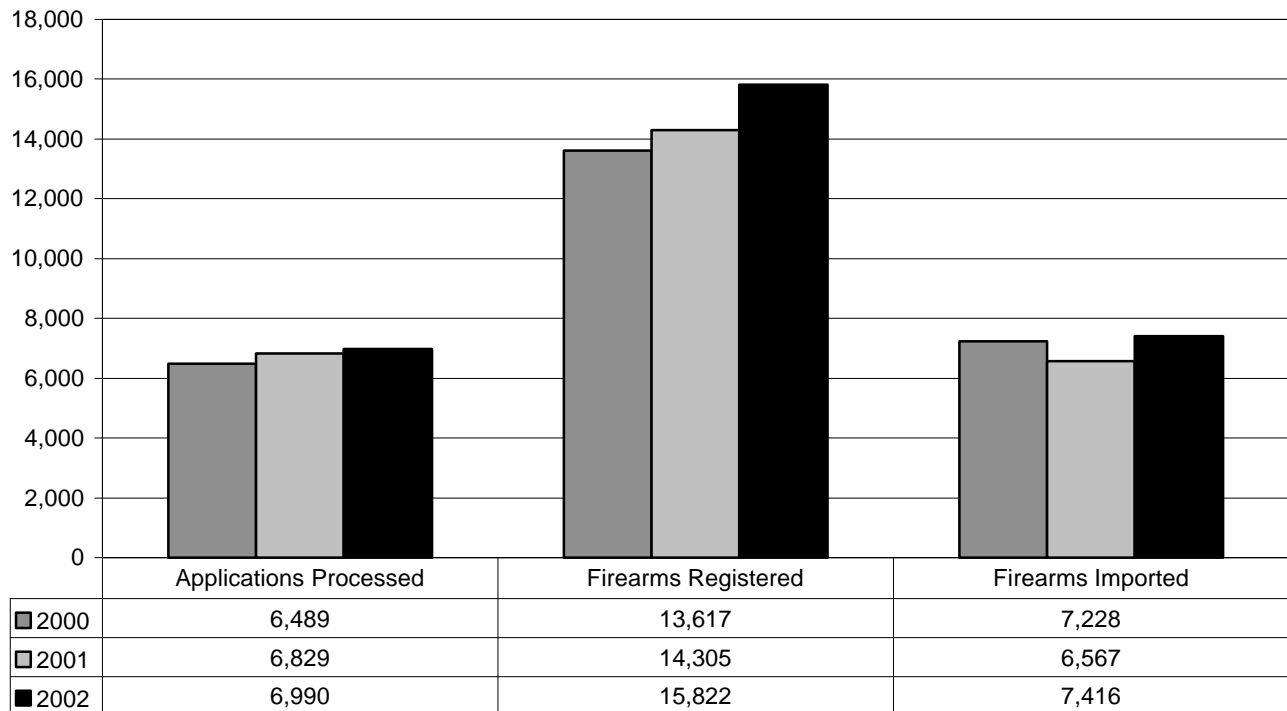
Figure 2: County Distribution of Permit Applications Processed and Rejected (2002) versus Resident Population Distribution (2001)



Registration Activity Over Time

Firearm registration activity has increased moderately over the three-year period that these data have been systematically collected and reported (Figure 3). From 2000 to 2002, the number of processed applications increased 7.7%, while the number of firearms registered rose 16.2% and the number of firearms imported edged up 2.6%.

Figure 3: Firearm Registration Trends, State of Hawaii, 2000-2002



Rejections

As noted earlier, 1.5% (103) of all permit applications in Hawaii during 2002 were rejected for cause. Hawaii's rejection rate compares favorably with the 2.3% figure reported for all state and local agencies conducting background checks for firearm permits and transfers in 2001 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002). That Hawaii's rejection rate is approximately one-third smaller than the national figure is especially noteworthy when Hawaii's comparatively exhaustive background check procedures and extensive list of disqualifying factors are taken into consideration.

Almost seven times as many longarm permit applications (90, or 1.3% of all processed applications) than handgun permit applications (13, or 0.2%) were rejected for cause.

Down by more than half in 2002, 24.3% (25) of the rejections were due to the applicants' prior criminal convictions, while 4.9% (5) arose from current indictments or otherwise pending cases. The majority (70.9%, or 73) of rejections in 2002 were not based on the criminal history of the applicants.

It is a misdemeanor in Hawaii to provide false 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 2002, falsified criminal or mental health information was provided in 71.8% (74) of the 103 rejection cases; falsified information *not* pertaining to criminal or mental health histories was provided in 4.9% (5); and no false information was provided in 23.3% (24) of the cases.

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

Table 2: Reasons for Rejecting Firearm Permit Applications, State of Hawaii, 2002

	Frequency	Percent of Total Rejections
Mental Health Issues/Treatment	63	61.2
“Other” Crime	19	18.4
Domestic Violence Offense	8	7.8
Other (e.g., non-U.S. citizen)	7	6.8
Drug Offense	3	2.9
Temporary Restraining Order	2	1.9
Disqualifying Juvenile Record	1	1.0

It should be noted that rejections for mental health issues, which comprise the majority 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 *per se*, a new application can be submitted and the appropriate permit will be issued. It is unknown how many applicants who are rejected for mental health reasons successfully reapply for permits.

Table 3 (next page) provides a breakdown of data entered into a description field for each rejection. These data have been edited slightly so as to add consistency to the open text written by registration personnel.

The most common specific reason for rejections in 2002 was, by far, court-ordered alcohol abuse assessment following a conviction for drunk driving, which is interpreted 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 comprised 20.4% (21) of all rejections, not including three other DUI-related cases that also involved other disqualifying factors. As many of these applicants may not have conceptualized an assessment of their alcohol use as “mental health treatment,” such cases possibly account for a significant portion of the rejections involving falsified information pertaining to mental health histories.

**Table 3: Descriptions of Firearm Permit Application Rejections,
State of Hawaii, 2002**

	Frequency	Percent of Total Rejections
abuse of family/household member	2	1.9
aggravated assault	1	1.0
alcohol abuse treatment	3	2.9
anxiety disorder	1	1.0
assault arrest in Illinois	1	1.0
assault	3	2.9
assault & battery in 1964	1	1.0
assault & battery in Michigan	1	1.0
assault 3	6	5.8
assault 3 + harassment	2	1.9
assault with deadly weapon	1	1.0
attempted suicide	1	1.0
bipolar disorder	1	1.0
burglary	1	1.0
burglary and felony theft	1	1.0
criminal record (unspecified)	1	1.0
current mental health treatment	1	1.0
current TRO	2	1.9
depression	1	1.0
depressive neurosis	1	1.0
detained in a psychiatric ward	1	1.0
disorderly conduct	1	1.0
doctor's recommendation	6	5.8
drug arrest; 2 pending charges	1	1.0
drug arrest; disposition unknown (out of state)	1	1.0
drug rehab	1	1.0
DUI/treatment	21	20.4
DUI/treatment + provided false info regarding a past TRO	1	1.0
DUI felony case pending	1	1.0
DUI and drug possession cases pending	1	1.0
felony firearm offense	1	1.0
harassment	2	1.9
mental health record (unspecified)	10	9.7
not a U.S. citizen	1	1.0
outstanding warrant	4	3.9
provided false info on questionnaire	1	1.0
post-traumatic stress disorder treatment	1	1.0
robbery	1	1.0
sale of marijuana	1	1.0
schizophrenia	3	2.9
substance abuse assessment ordered	1	1.0
terroristic threatening (felony level)	1	1.0
treatment for drug addiction	1	1.0
treatment for significant behavioral disorder	6	5.8
treatment for stress	2	1.9

Confiscations

Two prohibited firearms were confiscated by registration personnel during 2002. These included an “assault pistol” as defined by state law and a fully automatic rifle.

Licenses to Carry

The county police departments also process license applications for the open and/or concealed carry of firearms in public. During 2002, 239 employees of security firms were issued carry licenses and 6 were rejected due to specific disqualifying factors. Four private citizens also applied for a carry license and were denied at the discretion of the respective police chiefs.

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared with the input and assistance of the county police departments’ firearm registration personnel: **Debra Agena**, Records Clerk, Maui County Police Department; **Sergeant Crizalmer Caraang** and the firearm registration personnel 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 increasing 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 (September, 2002). *Background checks for firearms transfers, 2001*. Publication NCJ 195235. U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs.

Note: Due to rounding, percentages do not total 100.0 in all cases.

This report can be downloaded in PDF format from the
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