

# Criminal Justice Data Brief

Department of the Attorney General • Crime Prevention & Justice Assistance Division • hawaii.gov/ag/cpja

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## Firearm Registrations in Hawaii, 2009

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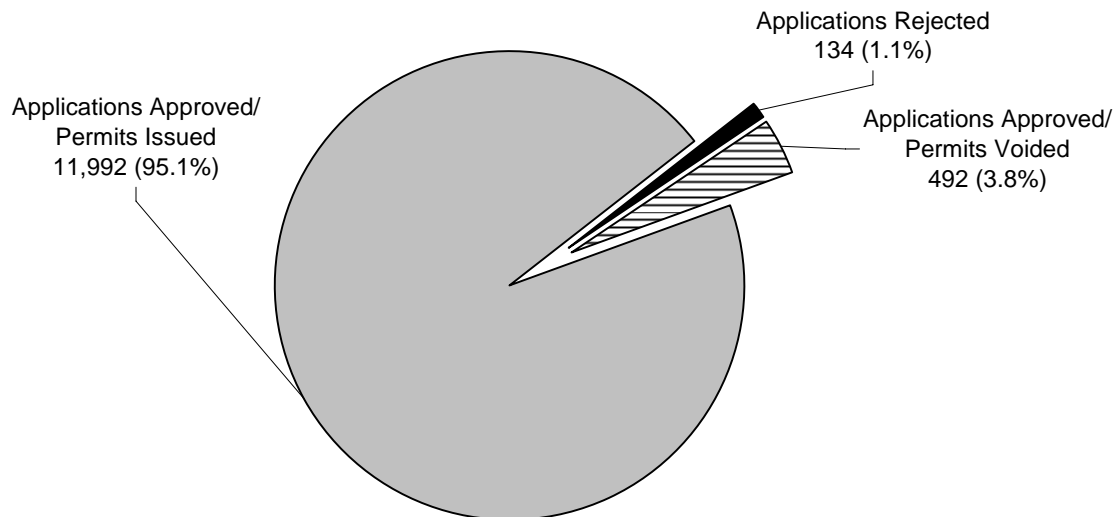
Hawaii Revised Statutes §134-14 requires the county police departments to provide to the Department of the Attorney General a monthly report of firearm registration activity. The data from these reports were compiled in order to provide the statistics presented herein for Calendar Year 2009. This is the tenth annual publication of *Firearm Registrations in Hawaii*.

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

A record high total of 12,606 personal/private firearm permit applications were processed statewide during 2009, marking a major, 19.7% increase from the previous record high of 10,527 applications processed in 2008. Of the applications processed in 2009, 95.1% were approved and resulted in issued permits; 3.8% were approved but subsequently voided after the applicants failed to return for their permits within a specified time period; and 1.1% 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, 2009**

(N = 12,606 Total Applications Processed)



## Registrations and Importations

The 11,992 permits issued statewide in 2009 cover a record high total of 33,678 firearms registered, outpacing by 29.6% the previous record high of 25,996 firearms registered in 2008. Just over half (16,897, or 50.2%) of the firearms registered during 2009 were imported from out-of-state, with the remainder (16,781, or 49.8%) 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 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, a record high of 58.3% (6,992) of the 11,992 total permits issued during 2009 were to acquire longarms, while a record low of 41.7% (5,000) 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 66.0% (22,228) of all firearms registered in 2009 (33,678). Broken out further, rifles and shotguns comprised 51.6% (17,391) and 14.4% (4,837) of total registrations, respectively. The remaining, record low 34.0% (11,450) of registered firearms were handguns.

## County Comparisons and Registration Trends

Table 1 shows the distribution of firearm registration activity during 2009 across the four counties and for the State of Hawaii overall.

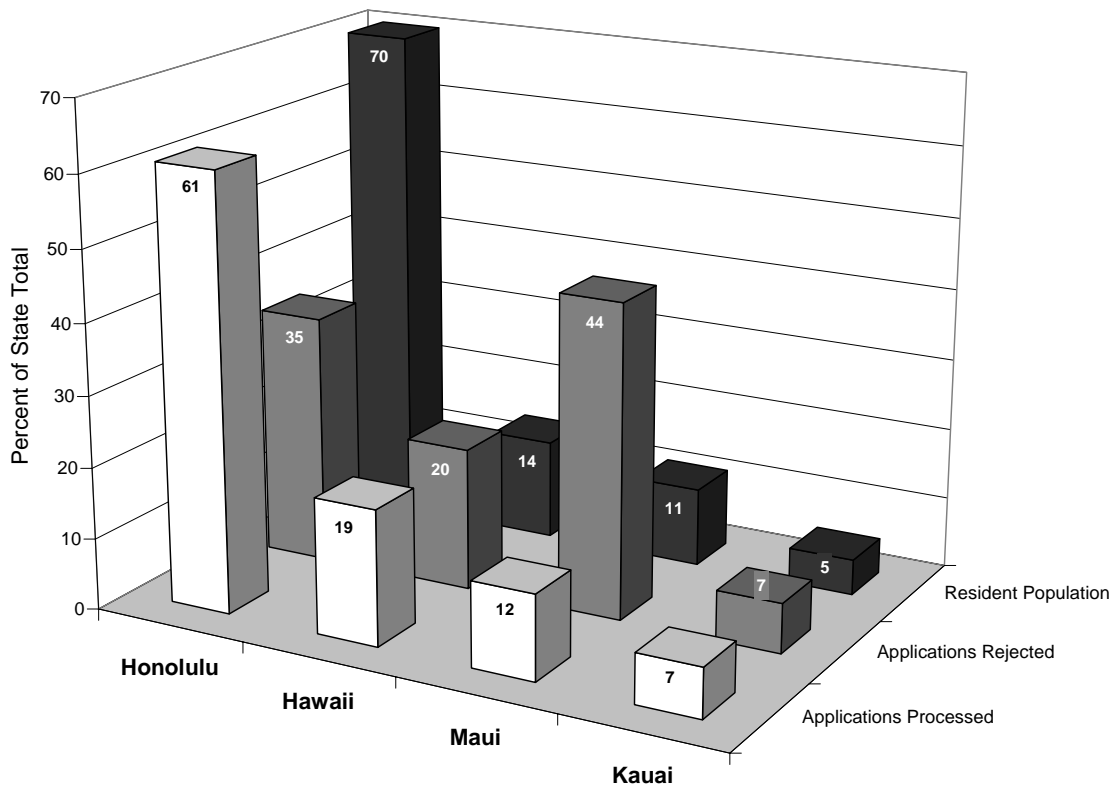
**Table 1: Firearm Registration Activity, State of Hawaii and Counties, 2009**

	C&C of Honolulu	Hawaii County	Maui County	Kauai County	State Total
Applications Processed	7,736	2,426	1,568	876	<b>12,606</b>
Applications Approved/ Permits Issued	7,301	2,372	1,459	860	<b>11,992</b>
Applications Approved/ Permits Voided	388	27	50	7	<b>480</b>
Applications Rejected	47	27	59	1	<b>134</b>
Rejection Rate	0.6%	1.1%	3.8%	0.1%	<b>1.1%</b>
Firearms Registered	21,631	6,727	3,316	2,004	<b>33,678</b>
Firearms Imported	11,450	3,183	1,533	731	<b>16,897</b>

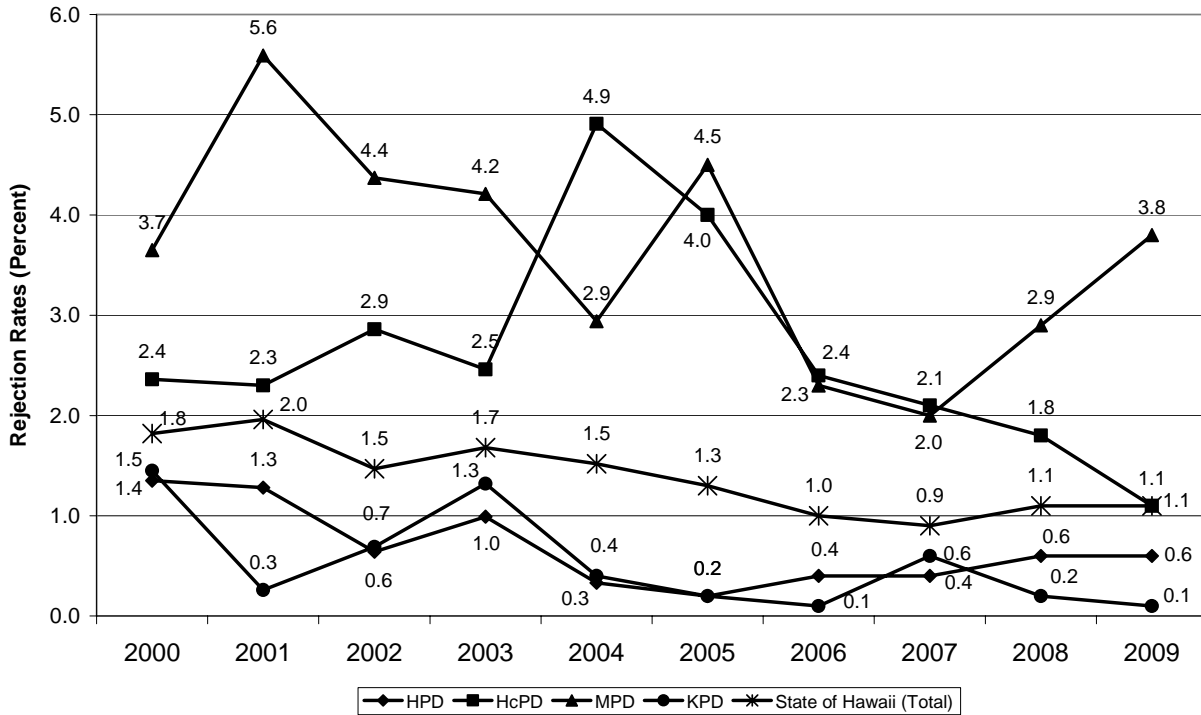
As compared to Hawaii's resident population distribution, firearm registration activity occurred disproportionately across the four counties during 2009 (see Figure 2). (If the counties' registration activity occurred in equal proportion to their respective population sizes, then the three bars depicted for each county in Figure 2 would be of equal height and value.)

Based on its population size, 12% fewer permit applications were processed in the City & County of Honolulu during 2009 than would be expected, and 50% fewer rejections were reported. Hawaii County recorded a 36% larger-than-expected share of processed applications and a 43% larger portion of rejections. Maui County processed applications in proportion to its population size, but its share of rejections quadrupled expectations. Kauai County had a slightly larger proportion of applications processed and rejected than would be anticipated based on its population size.

**Figure 2: County Distribution of Permit Applications Processed and Rejected versus Resident Population Distribution, 2009**

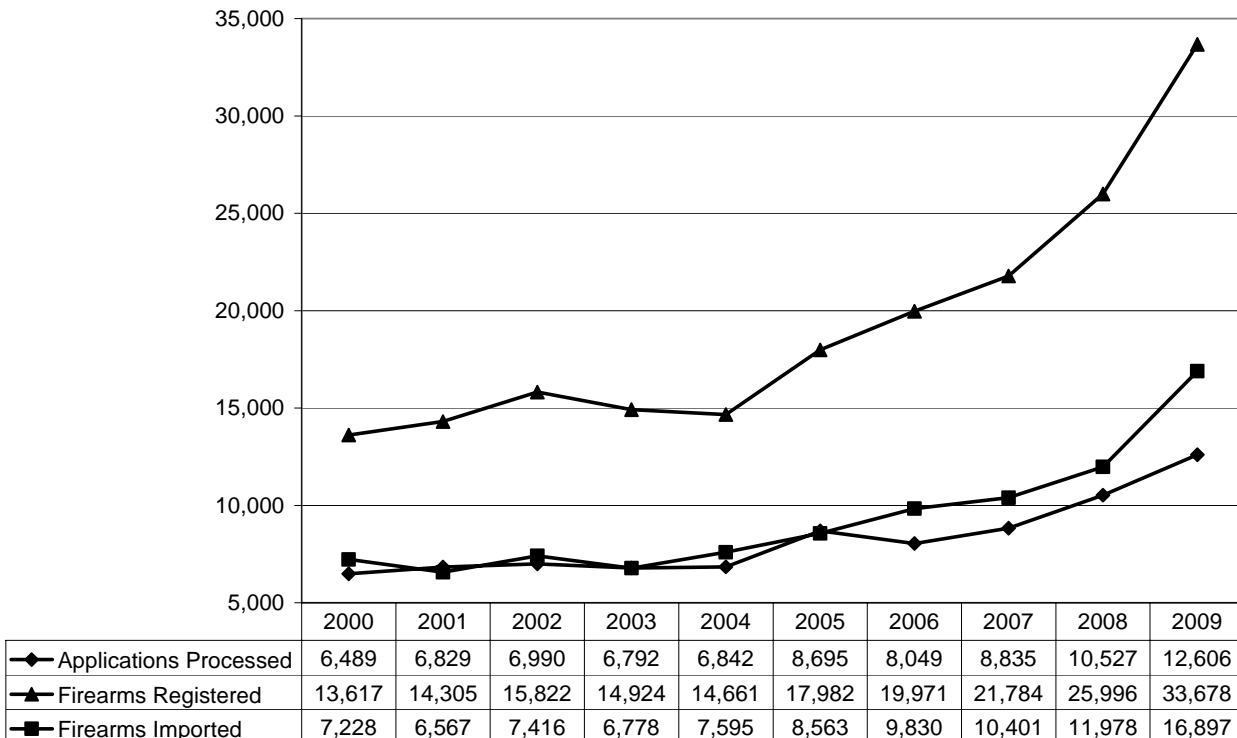


**Figure 3: Firearm Permit Application Rejection Rates, State of Hawaii and Counties, 2000-2009**



Firearm registration activity increased dramatically over the course of the decade for which these data have been systematically compiled and reported (see Figure 4). From 2000 through 2009, the number of permit applications processed annually increased 94.3%, the number of firearms registered surged 147.3%, and the number of firearms imported rose 133.8%.

**Figure 4: Firearm Registration Trends, State of Hawaii, 2000-2009**



## Permit Application Rejections

As noted earlier, 1.1% (134) of all permit applications in Hawaii during 2009 were rejected for cause. Hawaii's 2009 rejection rate is 42.0% (0.8 percentage points) below the 1.9% rate reported for all state and local agencies conducting background checks for firearm permits and transfers in 2008 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009).

The vast majority of rejections in Hawaii during 2009 were for longarm (112, or 83.6%) rather than handgun (22, or 16.4%) permit applications. Following a trend since this annual report was first published, longarm permit applications in 2009 were rejected at a rate that is several times higher than the rejection rate for handgun permit applications (1.5% for longarm permit applications versus 0.4% for handgun permit applications).

Over half (77, or 57.9%) of the rejections in 2009 were due to applicants' prior criminal convictions, while 18.0% (24) were due to pending criminal cases. The remaining 24.6% (33) of rejections in 2009 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 2009, falsified criminal and/or mental health information was provided in 68.4% (91) of the 134 rejection cases; falsified information pertaining to anything other than criminal or mental health histories was provided in 2.3% (3) of the cases; and no falsified information was provided in 29.3% (39) 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, 2009**

	#	%*
"Other" Offense	73	54.9
Other (e.g., non-U.S. citizen)	22	16.5
Domestic Violence Offense	21	15.8
Drug Offense	14	10.5
Mental Health Issues/Treatment*	10	7.5
Restraining/Protective Order	5	3.8

\* 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, 2009**

[N = 134 Rejections]	#	%*
abuse of family/household member	12	9.0
abuse of family/household member + terroristic threatening	1	.8
abuse of family/household member + warrant	1	.8
acquittal for mental incapacity	1	.8
assault	19	14.3
assault + abuse of family/household member	3	2.3
assault + warrant	1	.8
assault x 2	2	1.5
burglary	1	.8
burglary + theft	1	.8
burglary + weapons offense	1	.8
charges pending (unspecified)	1	.8
charges pending (unspecified) + mental health history	1	.8
dishonorable discharge	1	.8
disorderly conduct	2	1.5
disqualifying juvenile offense	2	1.5
doctor's clearance needed	7	5.3
doctor's recommendation	4	3.0
drug offense	2	1.5
drug offense + felony (unspecified)	1	.8
failure to prove residency	1	.8
false answer on application	3	2.3
felonies	2	1.5
felonies (unspecified)	1	.8
felonies (unspecified) + abuse of family/household member	1	.8
felony (unspecified)	4	3.0
fighting	1	.8
fraud	2	1.5
harassment	7	5.3
illegal drug sales	2	1.5
mainland records pending	5	3.8
mental health history	1	.8
mental health treatment	1	.8
motor vehicle theft	1	.8
NCIC response pending	1	.8
needs mental health clearance	1	.8
obstructing government operations	1	.8
on FBI prohibited persons list	1	.8
positive drug test within 1 year	6	4.5
resides with disqualified person	1	.8
resisting arrest	3	2.3
restraining order	3	2.3
restraining order violation	2	1.5
robbery	3	2.3
robbery + drug offenses	1	.8
sex assault	1	.8
sex assault + harassment	1	.8
theft	5	3.8
vehicular assault	1	.8
violent crime (unspecified)	2	1.5
was institutionalized + refused to provide clearance docs	1	.8
weapons offense	3	2.3

\* 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 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 2009, the City & County of Honolulu Police Department firearm registration section confiscated one prohibited weapon, an illegal “assault pistol” as defined 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 2008, 214 employees of private security firms were issued carry licenses, and two (0.9%) were rejected. Three private citizens applied for a concealed carry license in the City & County of Honolulu and were rejected for not meeting the 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; **Michelle Freire**, 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.

*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)**