

Criminal Justice Data Brief

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Firearm Registrations in Hawaii, 2010

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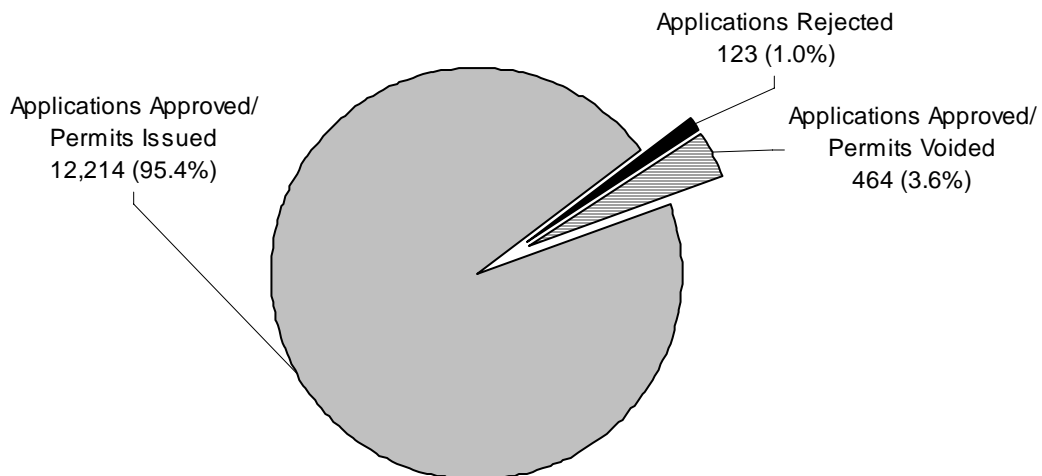
Hawaii Revised Statutes §134-14 requires the county police departments to provide to the Department of the Attorney General a monthly report of firearm registration activity. The data from these reports were compiled in order to provide the statistics presented herein for Calendar Year 2010. This is the eleventh annual publication of *Firearm Registrations in Hawaii*.

Permit Applications Processed, Issued, Voided, and Rejected

A record high total of 12,801 personal/private firearm permit applications were processed statewide during 2010, marking a 1.5% increase from the previous record high of 12,606 applications processed in 2009. Of the applications processed in 2010, 95.4% were approved and resulted in issued permits; 3.6% were approved but subsequently voided after the applicants failed to return for their permits within a specified time period; and 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, 2010**

(N = 12,801 Total Applications Processed)



Registrations and Importations

The 12,214 permits issued statewide in 2010 cover a total of 31,390 firearms registered, marking a 6.8% decrease from the record high of 33,678 firearms registered in 2009. Just under half (15,212, or 48.5%) of the firearms registered during 2010 were imported from out-of-state, with the remainder (16,178, or 51.5%) 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 58.5% (7,141) of the 12,214 total permits issued during 2010 were to acquire longarms, while a record low of 41.5% (5,073) 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 61.2% (19,211) of all firearms registered in 2010 (31,390). Broken out further, rifles and shotguns comprised 47.8% (15,017) and 13.4% (4,194) of total registrations, respectively. The remaining 38.8% (12,179) of registered firearms were handguns.

County Comparisons and Registration Trends

Table 1 shows the distribution of firearm registration activity during 2010 across the four counties and for the State of Hawaii overall.

Table 1: Firearm Registration Activity, State of Hawaii and Counties, 2010

	C&C of Honolulu	Hawaii County	Maui County	Kauai County	State Total
Applications Processed	7,738	2,420	1,796	847	12,801
Applications Approved/ Permits Issued	7,322	2,356	1,708	828	12,214
Applications Approved/ Permits Voided	381	23	42	18	464
Applications Rejected	36	41	46	1	123
Rejection Rate	0.5%	1.7%	2.6%	0.1%	1.0%
Firearms Registered	19,853	5,886	3,982	1,669	31,390
Firearms Imported	10,167	2,732	1,661	652	15,212

As compared to Hawaii's resident population distribution, firearm registration activity occurred disproportionately across the four counties during 2010 (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, 14% fewer permit applications were processed in the City & County of Honolulu during 2010 than would be expected, and 59% fewer rejections were reported. Hawaii County recorded a 36% greater-than-expected share of processed applications and a 136% larger portion of rejections. Maui County processed 27% more applications and rejected 236% more applications than expected. Kauai County reported a 40% larger proportion of applications processed and 80% fewer rejections than would be anticipated based on its population size.

Figure 2: County Distribution of Permit Applications Processed and Rejected versus Resident Population Distribution, 2010

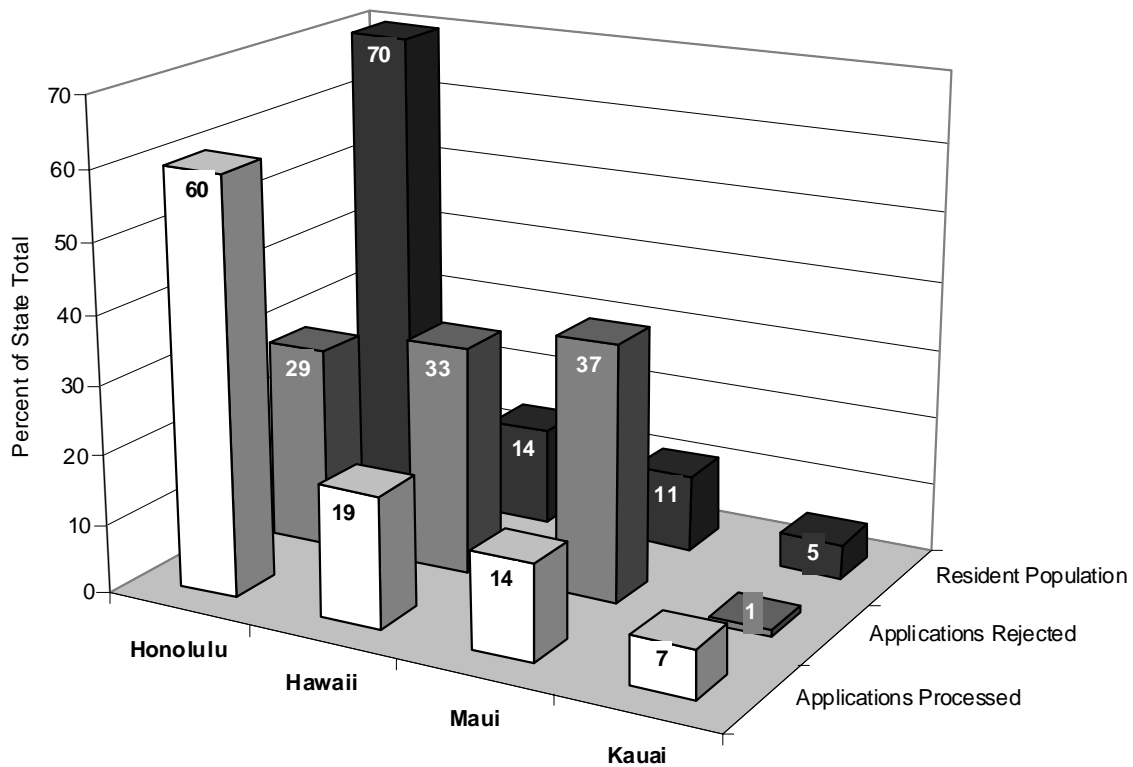
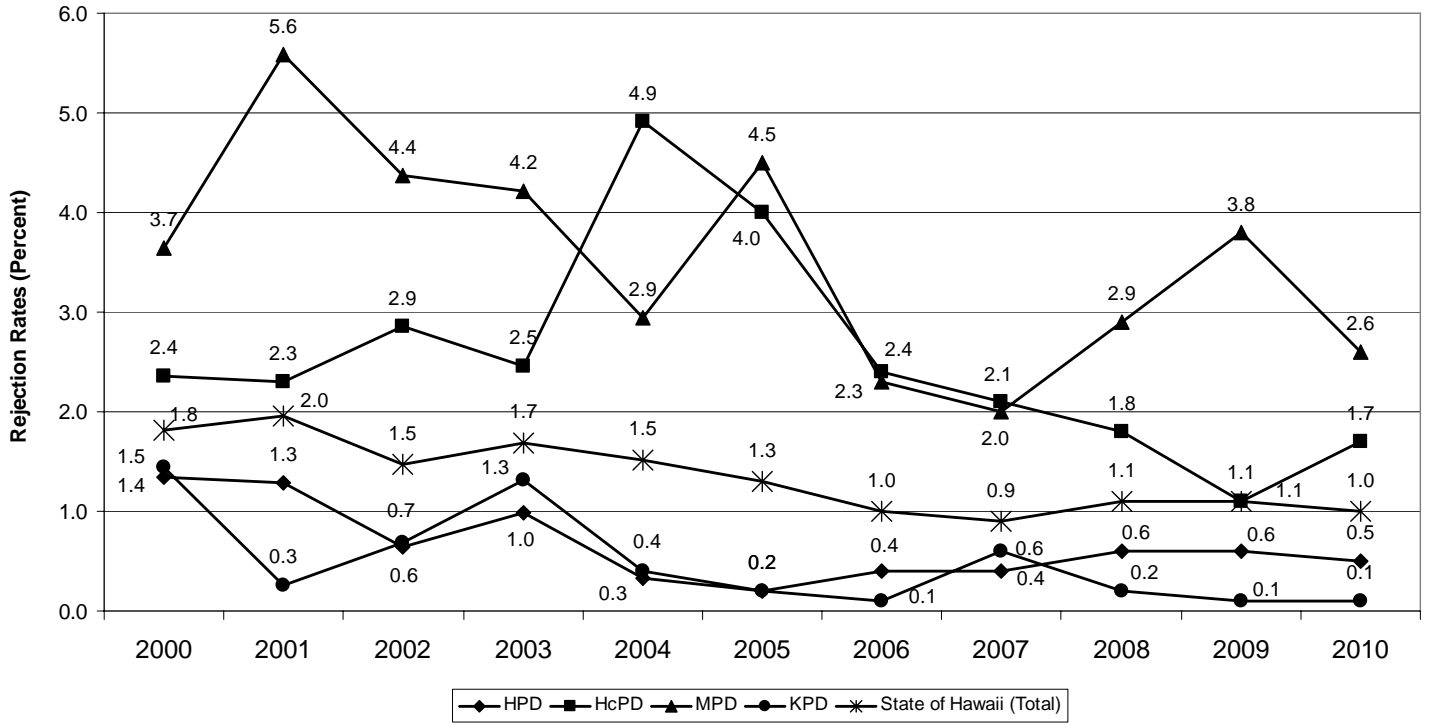
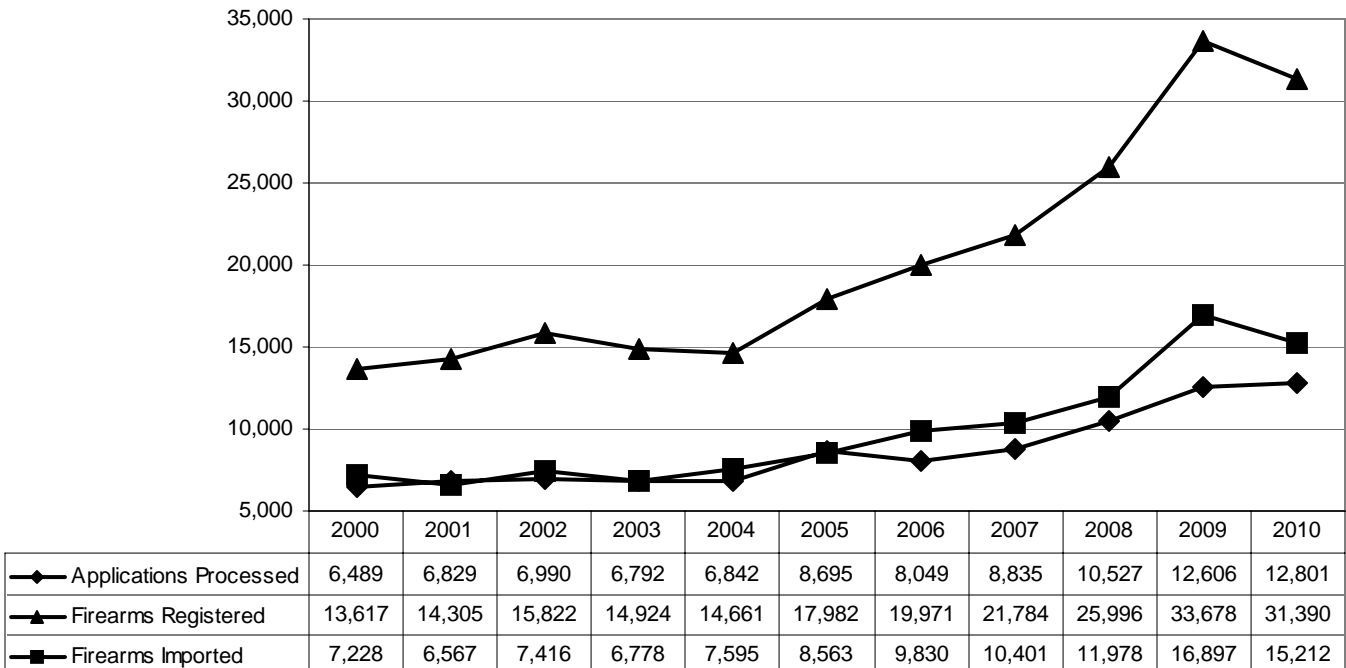


Figure 3: Firearm Permit Application Rejection Rates, State of Hawaii and Counties, 2000-2010



Firearm registration activity increased dramatically over the course of the eleven years for which these data have been systematically compiled and reported (see Figure 4). From 2000 through 2010, the number of permit applications processed annually increased 97.3%, the number of firearms registered surged 130.5%, and the number of firearms imported rose 110.5%.

Figure 4: Firearm Registration Trends, State of Hawaii, 2000-2010



Permit Application Rejections

As noted earlier, 1.0% (123) of all permit applications in Hawaii during 2010 were rejected for cause. Hawaii's 2010 rejection rate is 44.5% (0.8 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 vast majority of rejections in Hawaii during 2010 were for longarm (110, or 89.4%) rather than handgun (13, or 10.6%) permit applications. Following a trend since this annual report was first published, longarm permit applications in 2010 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 0.3% for handgun permit applications).

Nearly three-fifths (73, or 59.3%) of the rejections in 2010 were due to applicants' prior criminal convictions, while 12.2% (15) were due to pending charges. The remaining 28.5% (35) 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 2010, falsified criminal and/or mental health information was provided in 64.2% (79) of the 134 rejection cases; falsified information pertaining to anything other than criminal or mental health histories was provided in 3.3% (4) of the cases; and no falsified information was provided in 32.5% (40) 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, 2010

	#	%*
"Other" Offense	51	41.5
Domestic Violence Offense	26	21.1
Mental Health Issues/Treatment*	17	13.8
Drug Offense	16	13.0
Other (e.g., non-U.S. citizen)	16	13.0
Restraining/Protective Order	5	4.1
Disqualifying Juvenile Offense	2	1.6

* 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, 2010

[N = 134 Rejections]	#	%*
abuse of family/household member	15	12.2
abuse of family/household member + theft	1	.8
abuse of family/household member + felonies (unspecified) x 2	1	.8
abuse of family/household member + mental health treatment	1	.8
abuse of family/household member + terroristic threatening	2	1.6
acquittal for mental incapacity	1	.8
assault	12	9.7
assault + harassment	1	.8
assault + terroristic threatening + mental health treatment	1	.8
Battery (mainland)	5	4.1
burglary + forgery	1	.8
disorderly conduct (with violence)	2	1.6
disqualifying juvenile offense	2	1.6
disturbing the peace (fight-related)	1	.8
doctor recommended rejection	1	.8
domestic violence (mainland) + weapons offense	1	.8
domestic violence indictment (mainland)	1	.8
drug offense	10	8.1
drug offense + positive field test for drugs (DUI)	2	1.6
felony (unspecified)	3	2.4
harassment	10	8.1
history of alcohol and drug abuse	1	.8
married to disqualified person	1	.8
medical clearance needed	9	7.3
medical marijuana patient	2	1.6
mental health history + needs medical clearance	1	.8
mental health treatment	4	3.3
motor vehicle theft	1	.8
positive field test for drugs (DUI)	3	2.4
resides with a disqualified person	3	2.4
resisting arrest	2	1.6
restraining order	4	3.3
restraining order + mental health treatment	1	.8
restraining order violation	3	2.4
sexual assault	2	1.6
suicide attempt	1	.8
terroristic threatening	1	.8
theft	1	.8
warrant(s)	6	4.9
warrant(s) + mental health treatment + drug offense	1	.8
weapons offense	2	1.6

* 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 2010, 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 2010, 183 employees of private security firms were issued carry licenses, and seven (3.7%) 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

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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:
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