



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

Mark J. Bennett, Attorney General
Phone: (808) 586-1282
Fax: (808) 586-1239

For Immediate Release: February 26, 2003 News Release No. 2003-09

ATTORNEY GENERAL RELEASES FIREARM REGISTRATION STATISTICS

The Department of the Attorney General released a special report detailing state firearm registration statistics for Calendar Year 2002.

A total of 6,990 personal/private firearm permit applications were processed in Hawaii during 2002, marking a 2.4% increase from 2001 and up 7.7% since 2000. Of the applications processed in 2002, 95.1% were approved and resulted in issued permits; 3.4% 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. The proportion of rejections fell by one-quarter in 2002, down from 2.0% reported for 2001.

The 6,990 permits issued in 2002 cover a total of 15,822 firearms registered, resulting in a 10.6% increase over the number of firearms registered in 2001 and up 16.2% since 2000. Roughly half (46.9%) of the firearms registered in 2002 were imported from out of state, with the remainder accounted for by in-state transfers.

Firearm Registration Activity,
State of Hawaii and Counties, 2002

	C&C 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. Based on its population size, approximately 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.

Longarms (rifles and shotguns) comprised 57.4% (9,076) of all firearms registered in 2002; the remaining 45.1% (6,746) of registered firearms were handguns. Almost seven times as many longarm permit applications (90, or 1.3%) than handgun permit applications (13, or 0.2%) were rejected for cause.

Hawaii's 1.5% 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. 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.

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. The following table presents categorical data on the reasons for rejected permit applications.

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

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.

Applicants who are rejected on the basis on mental health histories can successfully reapply for firearm permits by producing a doctor's letter that states the applicant is no longer adversely affected.

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. 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.

Copies of the complete eight-page report can be downloaded from the Crime Prevention and Justice Assistance Division web site at cpja.ag.state.hi.us

###

For more information, contact:
Office of the Attorney General
Phone: (808) 586-1282

For detailed information, contact:
Paul Perrone
Chief of Research & Statistics
Phone: (808) 586-1420
Email: paul.a.perrone@hawaii.gov
