



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

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

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Attorney General releases annual firearm registration statistics

The Department of the Attorney General released a special report detailing state firearm registration statistics for Calendar Year 2003.

A total of 6,792 personal/private firearm permit applications were processed in Hawaii during 2003, marking a 2.8% decrease from 2002. Of the applications processed in 2003, 94.5% (6,417) were approved and resulted in issued permits; 3.8% (261) were approved but subsequently voided after the applicants failed to return for their permits within a specified time period; and 1.7% (114) were rejected due to one or more disqualifying factors.

Hawaii's 1.7% rejection rate compares favorably with the 2.1% figure reported for all state and local agencies conducting background checks for firearm permits and transfers in 2002. That Hawaii's rejection rate is lower 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.

The 6,792 permits issued in Hawaii during 2003 covered a total of 14,924 firearms registered, of which 6,167 (41.3%) were handguns, 6,168 (41.3%) were rifles, and 2,589 (17.3%) were shotguns. Roughly half (46.9%) of the firearms registered during 2003 were imported from out of state, with the remainder accounted for by in-state transfers. Although it is impossible to provide an exact tally of privately owned firearms in Hawaii, law enforcement estimates place the figure at over one million.

Firearm Registration Activity, State of Hawaii and Counties, 2003

	C&C of Honolulu	Hawaii County	Maui County	Kauai County	State Total
Applications Processed	4,248	1,381	784	379	6,792
Applications Approved/Permits Issued	3,986	1,333	724	374	6,417

Applications Approved/Permits Voided	220	14	27	0	261
Applications Rejected	42	34	33	5	114
Rejection Rate	1.0%	2.5%	4.2%	1.3%	1.7%
Firearms Registered	9,079	3,290	1,700	855	14,924
Firearms Imported	4,360	1,376	699	343	6,778

As compared to Hawaii's resident population distribution, firearm registration activity occurred disproportionately across the four counties during 2003. Based on its population size, 13% fewer permit applications were processed in the City & County of Honolulu than would be expected, and 49% fewer rejections were reported. Hawaii County recorded a 67% larger-than-expected share of processed applications and a 150% larger portion of rejections. Maui County processed applications proportionately to its population size, but its share of rejections was 164% larger than expected. Kauai County reported slightly more processed applications and slightly fewer rejections than would be anticipated based on population size.

Up from 24.3% (25 of 103) in 2002, 36.8% (42 of 114) of the rejections in 2003 were due to applicants' prior criminal convictions, while 2.6% (3) were due to pending criminal cases. However, the majority (60.5%, or 69) of rejections in 2003 were not based on the criminal histories of the applicants. The following table presents broad categorical data on the reasons for rejected permit applications.

Reasons for Rejecting Firearm Permit Applications, State of Hawaii, 2003

	Number	Percent*
Mental Health Issues/Treatment	52	45.6
"Other" Offense	25	21.9
Domestic Violence Offense	19	16.7
Other (e.g., non-U.S. citizen)	11	9.6
Drug Offense	5	4.4
Temporary Restraining Order	4	3.5
*Figures do not total 100% due to multiple disqualifying factors for a small number of applicants.		

The most common specific reason for rejections in 2003 was, by far, a court-ordered alcohol abuse assessment following a conviction for driving under the influence, which the police departments interpret 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 15.8% (18) of all rejections.

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 2003, falsified criminal or mental health information was provided in 71.9% (82) of the 114 rejection cases; falsified information not pertaining to criminal or mental health histories was provided in 3.5% (4); and no false information was provided in 24.6% (28) 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.

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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
