

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL - CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FIREARMS

USED IN THE COMMISSION OF CRIMES **2008**



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Firearms Used in the Commission of Crimes – 2008

**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

This report is available online at:
<http://ag.ca.gov/publications/index.php#firearms>

Division of Law Enforcement
Bureau of Forensic Services
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California Penal Code section 12039 requires the Attorney General to provide a report to the Legislature on the specific types of firearms used in the commission of crimes. This report details the number and type of firearms used most frequently in the commission of violent, homicidal, street and drug trafficking crimes in 2008. Also included is the frequency with which stolen and fully automatic firearms were used in the commission of these crimes. Although legislation for this report states that the data should be based on information obtained from local and state crime laboratories, the legislation does not require local laboratories to report this information to the Department of Justice. Therefore, local law enforcement agencies submit this information voluntarily, which limits the data received for inclusion in this report.

Purpose

This report is prepared by the California Department of Justice, Bureau of Forensic Services (BFS), for the Legislature as directed by California Penal Code section 12039. The report details the specific types of firearms used in the commission of various types of crimes.

Scope

This report includes firearms examined during 2008 in the BFS Regional Criminalistics Laboratories.

Because BFS serves principally the rural areas of California, the data in this report may not represent gun use trends within urban areas or within California as a whole.

Weapon Types (Figures 1 and 2)

Of the 142 weapons examined, there were 108 (76%) handguns, 23 (16%) rifles, and 11 (8%) shotguns. Of these firearms, 8 (6%) were assault weapons (as defined in California Penal Code section 12276) and 9 (6%) were classified as short-barreled shotguns. The most commonly encountered caliber was 9 mm Luger, followed by .22 rimfire, .380 Auto, and .25 Auto calibers.

**Firearms Used In All Crimes
142 Firearms**

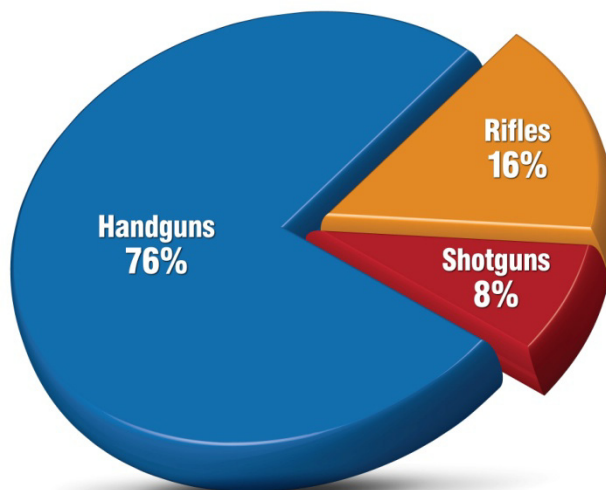


FIGURE 1

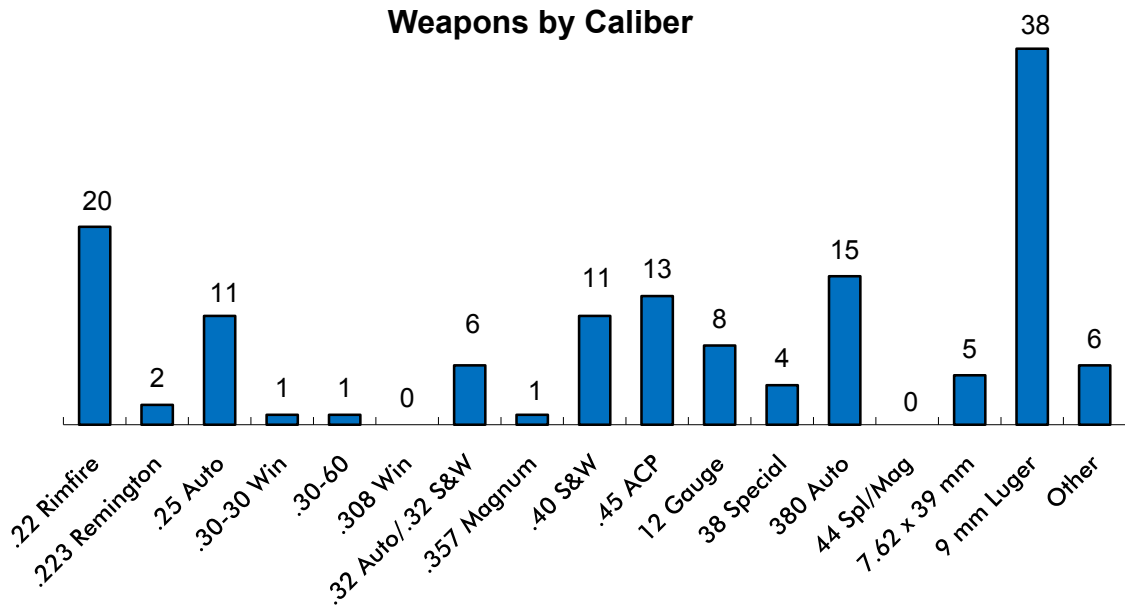


FIGURE 2

Crimes of Violence Other than Homicide (Figure 3)

Of the weapons examined, 60 (42% of the total) were submitted in cases involving crimes of violence other than homicide. There were 49 handguns, 8 rifles, and 3 shotguns.

Firearms Used in Crimes of Violence (Other than Homicide) 60 Firearms

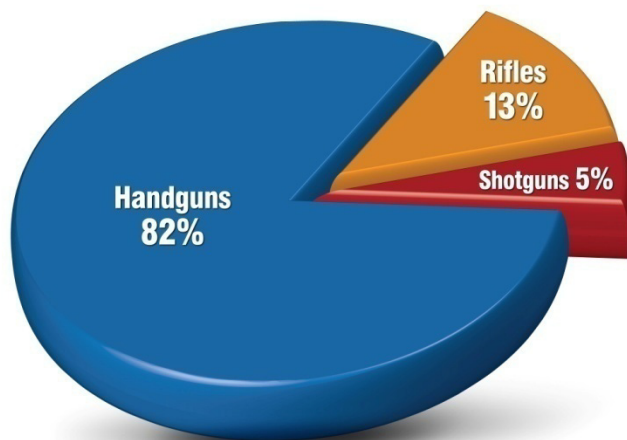


FIGURE 3

Homicides (Figure 4)

Of the 28 weapons (20% of the total) submitted in homicide cases, there were 17 handguns, 6 rifles, and 5 shotguns.



FIGURE 4

Drug Trafficking Crimes (Figure 5)

Of the 22 weapons (15% of the total) identified as being used in drug trafficking crimes, all were handguns.

Firearms Used in Drug Trafficking



FIGURE 5

Street Gang Crimes (Figure 6)

Of the 4 weapons (3% of the total) identified as being related to street gang crimes, there were 2 handguns, 1 rifle, and 1 shotgun.

Firearms Used in Street Gang Crimes

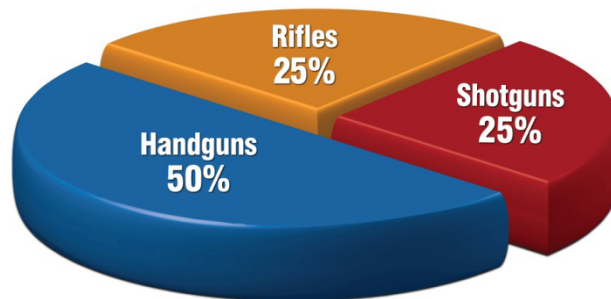


FIGURE 6

Special Cases (Figure 7)

California Assault Weapons

Eight of the weapons examined in 2008 were identified as California Assault Weapons (as defined in California Penal Code section 12276).

Stolen Firearms

Of the firearms examined, one was confirmed to have been reported stolen. For many of the other firearms examined, ownership status was not determined.

Serial Number Removed

Sixteen weapons (11% of the total) were submitted with the serial numbers removed.

Machine Gun or Full Auto Weapon Conversion

One machine gun or converted weapon was examined this year.

Short-Barreled Rifle or Shotgun

Nine (6% of the total) of the examined firearms were classified as short-barreled rifles or shotguns.

Officer-Involved Shooting Incidents

Of the 10 (7% of the total) firearms identified as being related to officer-involved shooting incidents, there were 7 handguns, 2 rifles, and 1 shotgun.

Silencers

Two (1% of the total) firearms with silencers were submitted this year.

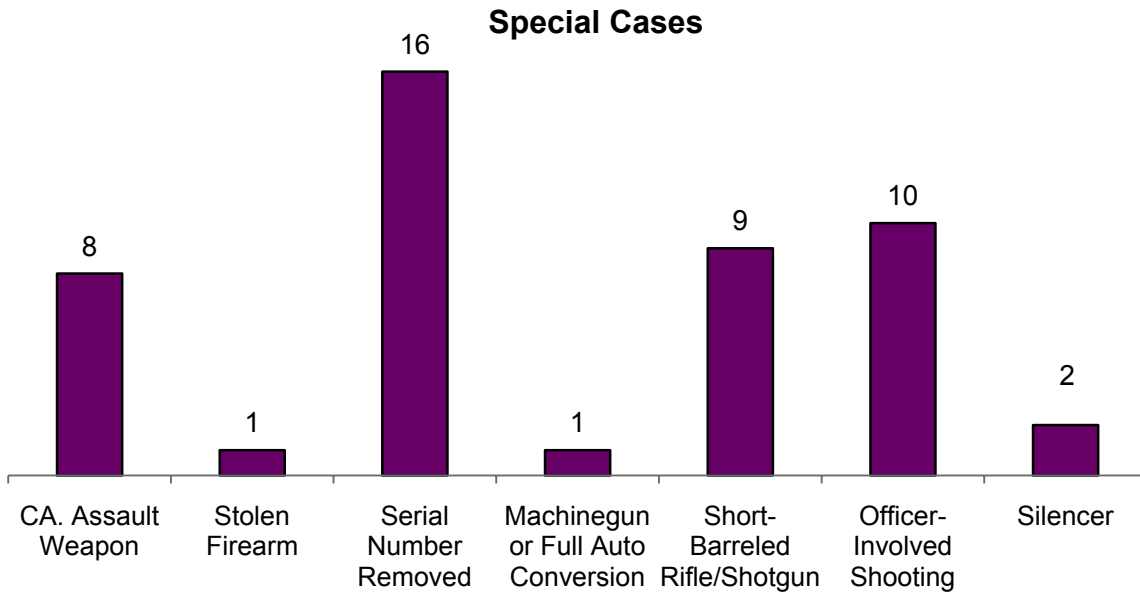


FIGURE 7

California Assault Weapons by Year (Figure 8)

California Assault Weapon use has continued at a relatively low level since it was first reported.

**CA Assault Weapons Used in Crimes
by Year, 1999-2008**

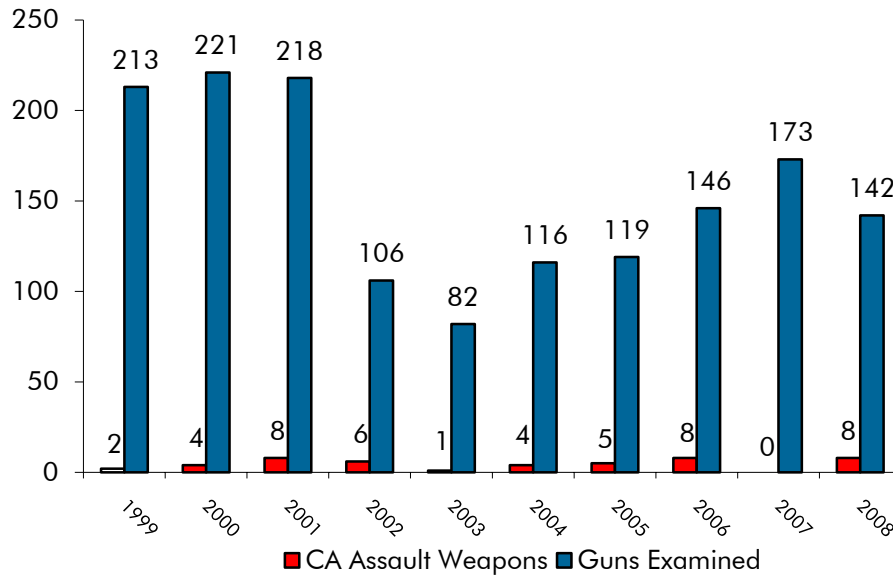


FIGURE 8

Penal Code Section 12039

The Attorney General shall provide the Legislature on or before April 15 of each year, commencing in 1998, a written report on the specific types of firearms used in the commission of crimes based upon information obtained from state and local crime laboratories. The report shall include all of the following information regarding crimes in which firearms were used: (a) A description of the relative occurrence of firearms most frequently used in the commission of violent crimes, distinguishing whether the firearms used were handguns, rifles, shotguns, assault weapons, or other related types of weapons. (b) A description of specific types of firearms that are used in homicides or street gang and drug trafficking crimes. (c) The frequency with which stolen firearms were used in the commission of the crimes. (d) The frequency with which fully automatic firearms were used in the commission of the crimes. (e) Any trends of importance such as those involving specialized ammunition or firearms modifications, such as conversion to a fully automatic weapon, removal of serial number, shortening of barrel, or use of a suppressor.



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