

NEWS RELEASE



Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr.
California Department of Justice
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Brown Cracks Down On Illegal Gun Possession

LOS ANGELES – California Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr. and Los Angeles Police Chief William Bratton today announced the seizure of 541 handguns, rifles and assault weapons during a “statewide crackdown” on 1,000 dangerous individuals barred from firearms possession because of violent felony convictions.

“During this statewide crackdown, Department of Justice agents investigated 1,000 of the most dangerous cases in the state’s firearms database,” Brown told a news conference at the attorney general’s Los Angeles headquarters. “The Department of Justice joined with local law enforcement to disarm hundreds of individuals—felons, domestic violence perpetrators, and people committed to mental health facilities—that should have relinquished their weapons.”

Department of Justice agents utilized a state database, known as the Armed and Prohibited Persons System, to identify persons who lawfully acquired firearms in the past but became barred from possession due to a subsequent felony conviction. The database, which currently has 9,000 cases, could eventually expand to include 60,000 individuals as new offender records are added to the system.

During the six-week operation, Department of Justice agents went door to door with local law enforcement to disarm the 1,000 most dangerous armed and violent felons identified in the state database. During the investigation agents seized 541 firearms, conducted 205 probation or parole searches and made 16 field arrests. During one investigation in Alameda County, agents seized over 100 rifles, handguns and assault weapons. In another case, agents confiscated three firearms and neo-Nazi propaganda including a swastika flag.

The goal of this investigation was to prevent violent crime in California by disarming individuals who were the most likely to use their unlawfully held guns to commit violent crimes. To identify the highest risk cases, analysts from the California Department of Justice created investigative case files on persons who legally acquired firearms in the past, but failed to relinquish the weapons after a violent felony conviction.

Department of Justice agents typically take action when firearm owners should have relinquished weapons after events such as:

- Felony convictions
- Violent or firearms-related misdemeanors
- Domestic violence incidents
- Protective orders, probation conditions, and other court orders
- Involuntary commitments under Welfare and Institutions Code section 5150 or 5250

The Attorney General’s Office will keep the seized guns in a state evidence vault until criminal proceedings are concluded or other arrangements are made by the owners to sell or relinquish the firearms. Eventually

many of the weapons may be destroyed.

Dozens of law enforcement agencies worked with the California Department of Justice during the investigation including: Los Angeles Police Department (110 cases), Fresno Police Department (25 cases), Oakland Police Department (25 cases), Redding Police Department (15 cases), San Bernardino Police Department (10 cases), San Jose Police Department (10 cases) and Butte County Sheriff's Office (10 cases). The California Police Chiefs Association and the California State Sheriffs' Association also provided important assistance during the investigation.

Attorney General Brown called the investigation an important partnership with local law enforcement to disarm those who are likely to commit violent crimes. "There are thousands of people in California who acquired guns lawfully in the past, committed a crime, and should no longer have weapons," Brown said. "The Department of Justice is committed to working with local law enforcement to confiscate these weapons and make the streets safer," Brown added.

SB 950, which was signed into law in 2002, established the legal authority for the state to cross-reference criminal history information with firearms possession records. In July 2003, the Department of Justice received funding to build a database of this information—the Armed and Prohibited Persons System—which became operational in 2006 and made fully available to local law enforcement in 2007. In June, Attorney General Brown expanded the system so that law enforcement agencies can obtain information about offenders by jurisdiction rather than just through individual names searches.

California Department of Justice special agents have trained approximately 500 sworn local law enforcement officials in 196 police departments and 35 sheriffs departments on how to use the database during firearms investigations. The Department has also conducted 50 training sessions on how to use the vehicle-mounted California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System terminals to access the database.

The California Department of Justice Bureau of Firearms serves the people of California through regulation, enforcement and education regarding the manufacture, sales, ownership, safety training, and transfer of firearms. For more information about firearms law in California visit the California Department of Justice Bureau of Firearms Website: <http://ag.ca.gov/firearms/>

A photo of seized firearms from the operation is attached.

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