

# 2018

# Firearms

## Used in the Commission of Crimes

This report is available online at  
<http://oag.ca.gov/publications#crime>

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## Table of Contents

Legislative Mandate. . . . .	1
Scope . . . . .	2
Firearm Categories Used in Crimes. . . . .	2
Crimes of Violence Other than Homicide . . . . .	3
Homicides . . . . .	4
Street Gang Crimes . . . . .	4
Drug Trafficking Crimes . . . . .	4
California Assault Weapons by Year . . . . .	5
Trends and Special Cases . . . . .	6

## Legislative Mandate

California Penal Code section 34200<sup>1</sup> requires the Department of Justice (DOJ) to provide the Legislature on or before April 15 of each year 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. Although DOJ is required to produce this annual report based on data obtained from state and local crime laboratories, there is no corresponding mandate for local crime laboratories to provide their data to the DOJ. The report must 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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<sup>1</sup> Previously California Penal Code section 12039

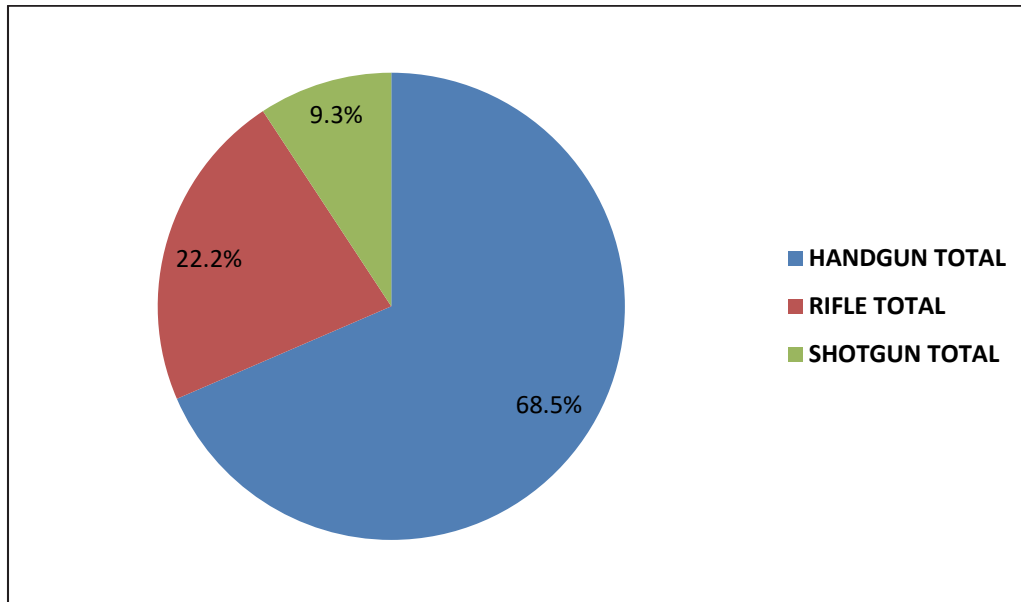
## Scope

The 2018 Firearms Used in the Commission of Crimes report is limited in scope because it only includes data from DOJ crime laboratories. Data was collected from all ten of DOJ's regional laboratories. Because DOJ's regional laboratories principally serve the rural areas of California, the data in this report may not represent gun use trends in urban areas or across California as a whole. This report does not include data from the crime laboratories that serve California's major cities and urban areas as these laboratories are not statutorily mandated to provide data to the DOJ for purposes of this report.

During 2018, data collected from the DOJ's Bureau of Forensic Services (BFS) crime laboratories revealed that 54 of the 635 completed examinations involved firearms that qualified for inclusion in this report. Small inconsistencies in data totals are reflective of the fact that data may fit multiple categories.

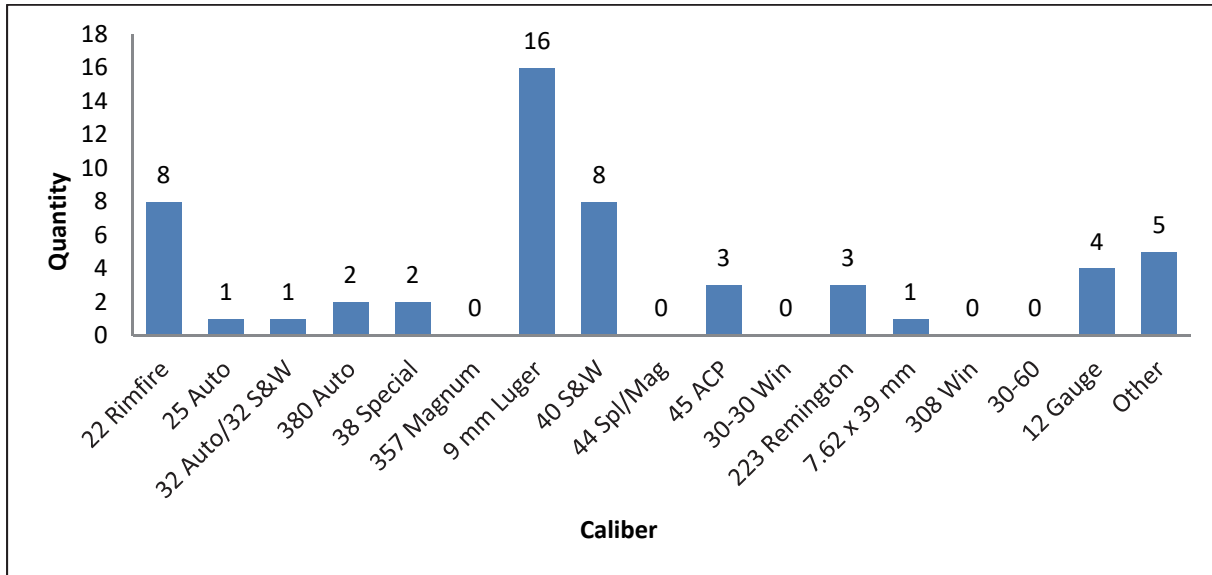
## Firearm Categories Used in Crimes

The 54 qualifying firearms examined by DOJ during the reporting period included 37 handguns (68.5 percent), 12 rifles (22.2 percent), and five shotguns (9.3 percent; see figure 1). Six firearms were assault weapons (as defined in Pen. Code §§ 30510 and 30515) and four firearms were classified as a short-barreled shotgun or rifle. The most commonly encountered calibers were 9 mm Luger and 40 Smith & Wesson (S&W), followed by .22 Rimfire (see Figure 2, next page).



**Figure 1: Firearms types used in crimes**

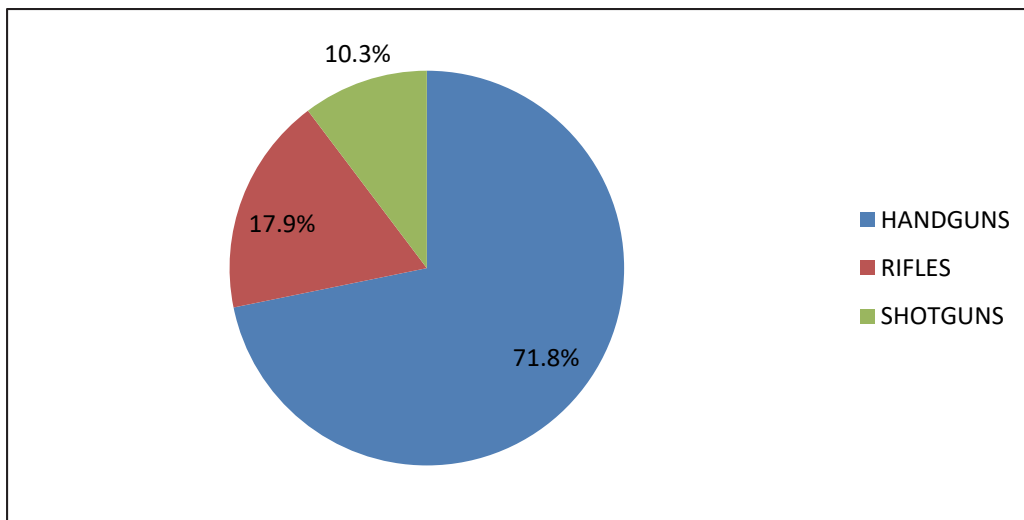
## Firearm Categories Used in Crimes, continued



**Figure 2: Calibers of weapons used in crimes**

## Crimes of Violence other than Homicide

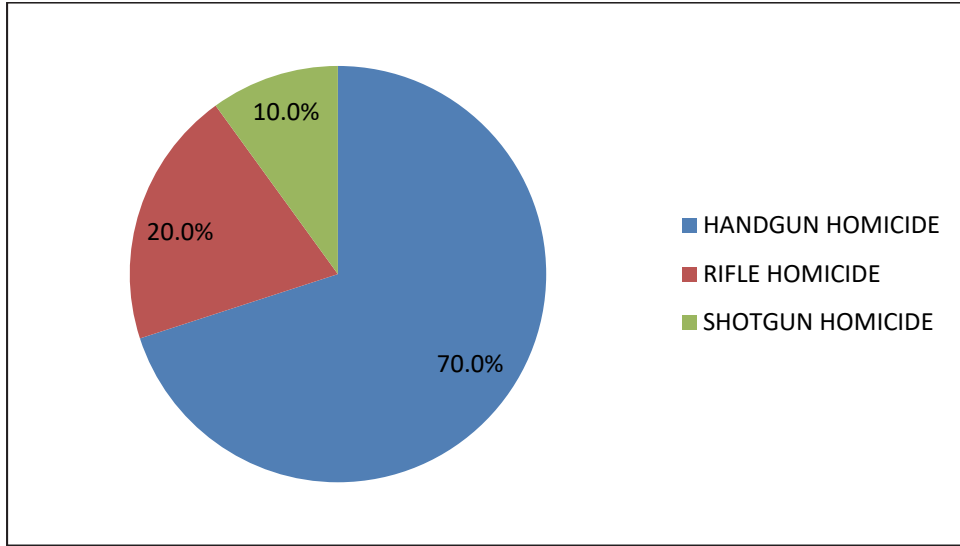
Thirty-nine of the firearms examined by DOJ were submitted in cases involving crimes of violence other than homicide. These 39 firearms included 28 handguns (71.8 percent), seven rifles (17.9 percent), and four shotguns (10.3 percent; see figure 3).



**Figure 3: Firearms used in crimes of violence (other than homicide).**

## Homicides

The 10 firearms that were submitted to DOJ laboratories in homicide cases included seven handguns (70 percent), two rifles (20 percent), and one shotgun (10 percent). There were no fully automatic firearms linked to homicides. No machine guns were used in 2018. These figures are graphically depicted in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Firearms used in homicides**

## Street Gang Crimes

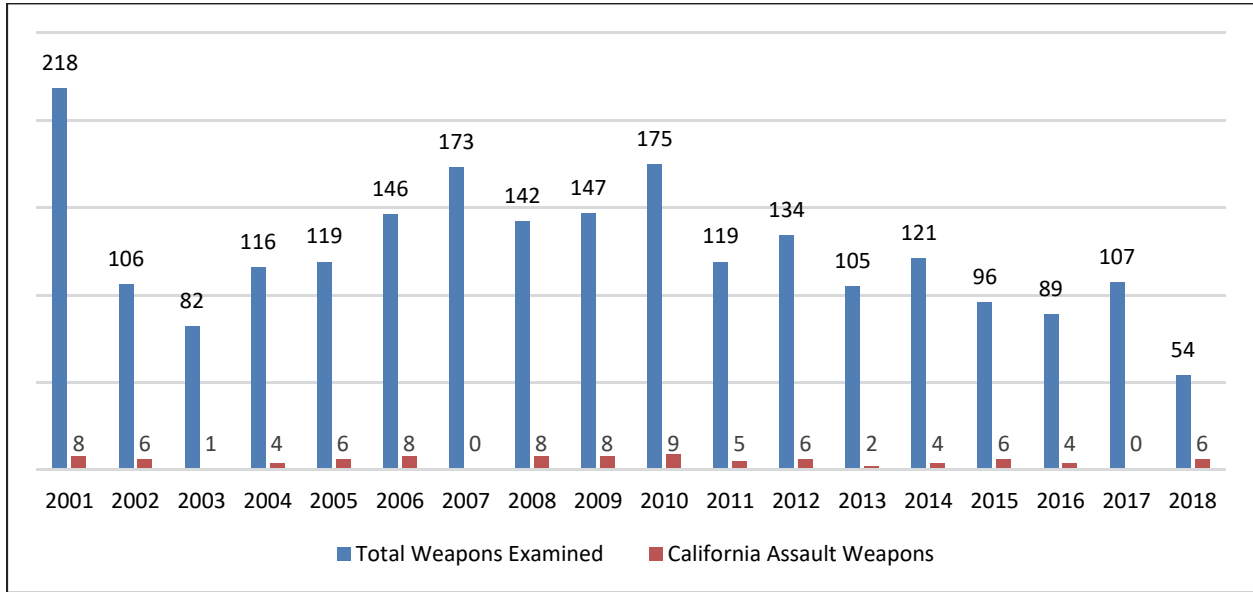
Twelve handguns and one shotgun were identified as being related to street gang crimes.

## Drug Trafficking Crimes

Three handguns and one rifle were identified as being used in drug trafficking crimes.

## California Assault Weapons by Year

In 2018, California assault weapon use increased and represented over ten percent of total firearms. Prior to this year, there has been relatively minimal change in assault weapon numbers compared to total weapons examined.



**Figure 5: California assault weapons used in the commission of crimes by year**

Note: The reported number of California Assault Weapons is based on a defined list for each year. That list has been expanded a number of times since 1998; therefore, subsequent years may include firearms that were not counted previously.

## **Trends and Special Cases**

### **California Assault Weapons**

- Six of the firearms examined in 2018 were identified as California Assault Weapons (as defined in Pen. Code §§ 30510 and 30515) (see Figure 5).

### **Stolen Firearms**

- None of the firearms examined were confirmed to have been reported stolen.
- Ownership status was not determined for many of the firearms examined.

### **Serial Numbers Removed**

- One firearm was submitted with the serial number removed.

### **Full-Auto Firearms (Machine Guns, Submachine Guns or Full-Auto Conversions)**

- No qualifying firearm exhibiting full-auto fire was examined this year.

### **Short Barreled Shotguns or Rifles**

- Seven of the examined firearms were classified as a short-barreled or short overall-length shotgun or rifle.

### **Officer-Involved Shooting Incidents**

- The eight firearms identified as being related to officer-involved shooting incidents were three handguns, four rifles, and one shotgun.

### **Suppressors**

- One firearm equipped with a suppressor (silencer) was examined this year.

### **Unusual Ammunition**

- There were no reported examinations of armor piercing, exploding, frangible, Glazer-type, incendiary or tracer ammunition.