

Firearm Registrations in Hawaii, 2017

Department of the Attorney General

• Crime Prevention & Justice Assistance Division

• ag.hawaii.gov/cpja

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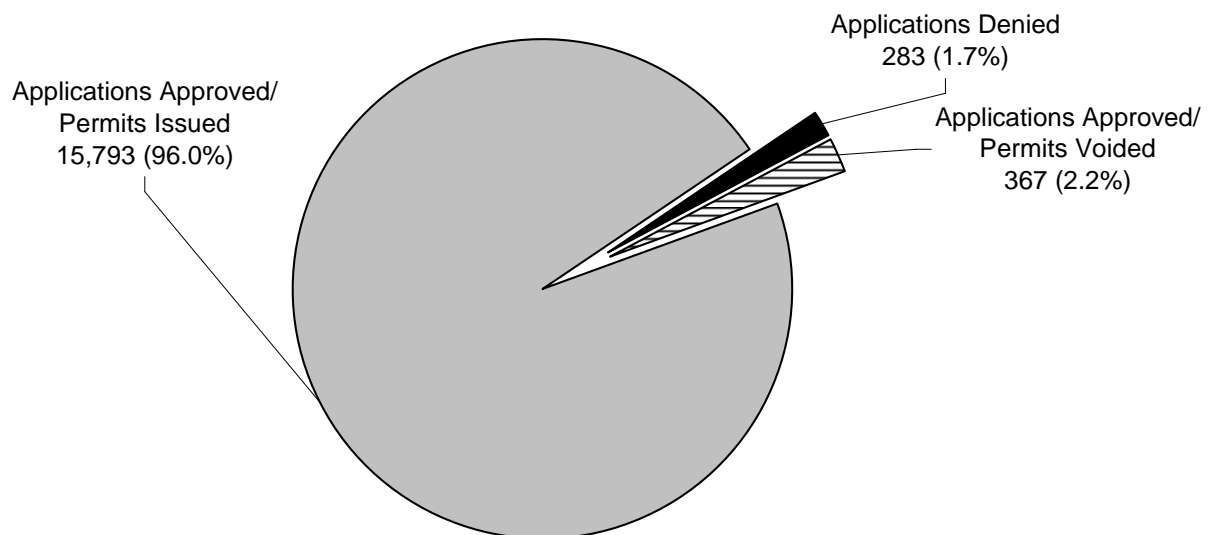
Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) § 134-14 requires the county police departments to provide to the Department of the Attorney General a monthly report of firearm registration activity. The data from these reports were compiled in order to provide the statistics presented herein for Calendar Year 2017. This is the eighteenth annual publication of *Firearm Registrations in Hawaii*.

Permit Applications Processed, Issued, Voided, and Denied

A total of 16,443 personal/private firearm permit applications were processed statewide during 2017, marking a 23.2% decrease from 21,408 applications processed in 2016. Of the applications processed in 2017, 96.0% were approved and resulted in issued permits; 2.2% were approved but subsequently voided after the applicants failed to return for their permits within the specified time period; and 1.7% were denied due to one or more disqualifying factors. Figure 1 provides additional information. Denials are described in greater detail throughout this report.

**Figure 1: Firearm Permit Application Outcomes,
State of Hawaii, 2017**

16,443 Applications Processed



Registrations and Importations

The 15,793 permits issued statewide in 2017 cover a total of 40,635 firearms registered throughout the year, resulting in a 23.9% decrease from the 53,400 firearms registered during 2016. Over half (21,142, or 52.0%) of the firearms registered during 2017 were imported from out-of-state, with the balance accounted for by transfers of firearms that were previously registered in Hawaii. Independent estimates made during the late-1990s by the Department of the Attorney General and the City and County of Honolulu Police Department conservatively placed the number of privately owned firearms in Hawaii at “at least one million.” Adding to that rough tally during the 2000 through 2017 period, a total of 561,257 firearms were registered (including some more than once, by different owners) and 276,977 were imported, but there is no way to track the number of firearms that permanently leave the state.

Permits and Registrations, by Firearm Type

In the State of Hawaii, annual permits are issued in order to acquire an unlimited number of longarms (rifles and shotguns), while single-use permits are issued to acquire specific handguns. By firearm type, 50.7% (8,002) of the permits issued during 2017 were to acquire longarms, while 49.3% (7,791) were handgun permits. The tally of handgun permits is perennially confounded, however, as some of the county police departments issue a single permit listing all handguns that will be acquired simultaneously from the same source (i.e., one permit per transaction, per HRS § 134-2(e)), while the other departments issue one permit per handgun even if they are acquired in the same transaction.

Longarms accounted for 55.1% (22,394) of all firearms registered during 2017 (40,635). Broken out further, rifles and shotguns comprised 45.0% (18,304) and 10.1% (4,090) of total registrations, respectively. The remaining 44.9% (18,241) of firearms registered throughout 2017 were handguns.

County Comparisons and Registration Trends

Table 1 shows the distribution of firearm registration activity during 2017 across the four counties and for the State of Hawaii overall.

**Table 1: Firearm Registration Activity,
State of Hawaii and Counties, 2017**

	C&C of Honolulu	Hawaii County	Maui County	Kauai County	State Total
Applications Processed	10,326	3,223	1,662	1,232	16,443
Applications Approved/ Permits Issued	9,978	3,094	1,600	1,121	15,793
Applications Approved/ Permits Voided	192	35	39	101	367
Applications Denied	156	94	23	10	283
Denial Rate*	1.5%	2.9%	1.4%	0.8%	1.7%
Firearms Registered	25,299	8,328	4,121	2,887	40,635
Firearms Imported	13,751	4,151	1,888	1,352	21,142

* The most comparable national figure is a 4.2% estimated average denial rate in 2015 for jurisdictions that require a buyer to obtain, after a local agency-conducted background check, a government-issued document that must be presented to a seller before the buyer can receive a firearm (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017).

As compared to Hawaii's resident population distribution, firearm registration activity occurred disproportionately across the four counties during 2017 (see Figure 2). (If the counties' registration activity occurred in equal proportion to their respective population sizes, then the three bars depicted for each county in Figure 2 would be of equal height and value.)

Figure 2: County Distribution of Permit Applications Processed and Denied versus Resident Population Distribution, 2017

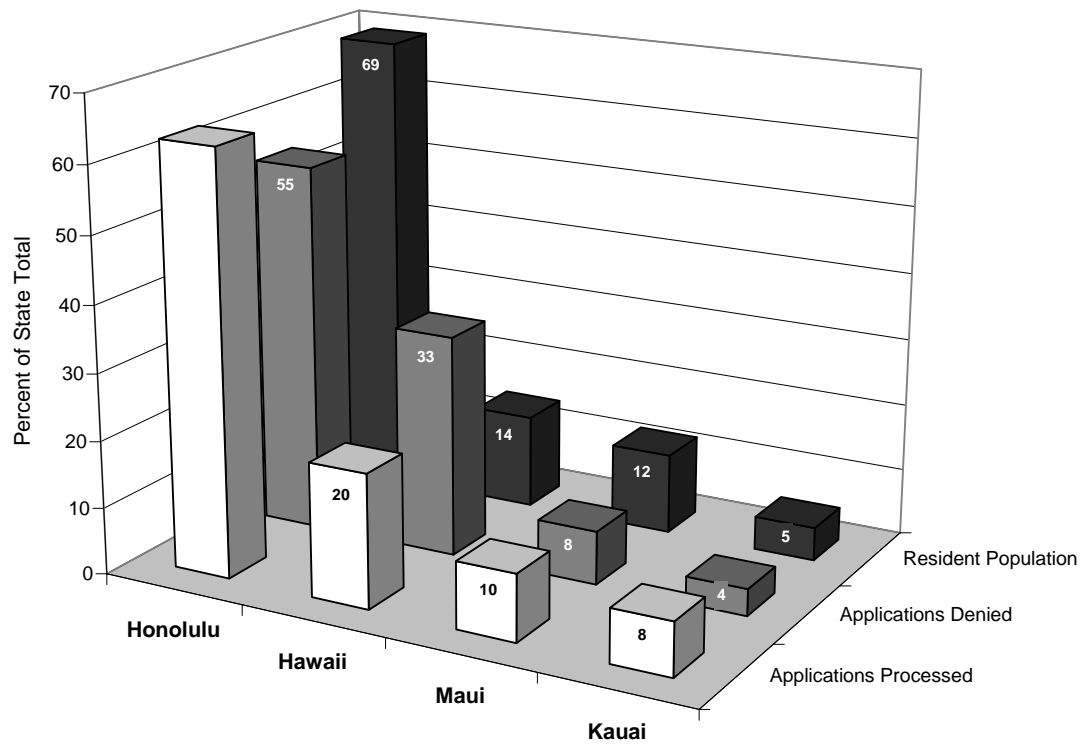
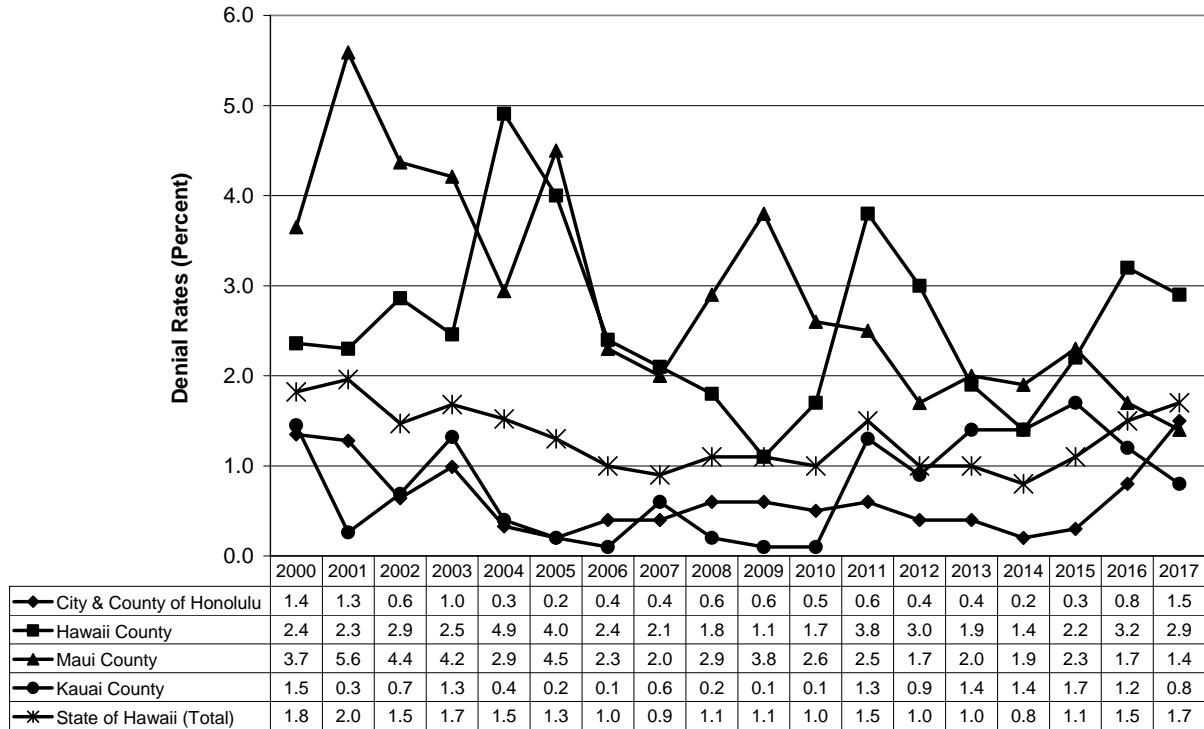


Figure 3 (next page) presents historical data on permit application denial rates for the State of Hawaii and each of the four counties.

**Figure 3: Firearm Permit Application Denial Rates,
State of Hawaii and Counties, 2000-2017**



Firearm registration activity increased dramatically over the course of the 18 years for which these data have been systematically compiled and reported (see Figure 4). From 2000 through 2017, the number of statewide permit applications annually processed increased by 153.4%, the number of firearms annually registered leaped 198.4%, and the number of firearms annually imported rose 192.5%.

**Figure 4: Firearm Registration Trends,
State of Hawaii, 2000-2017**

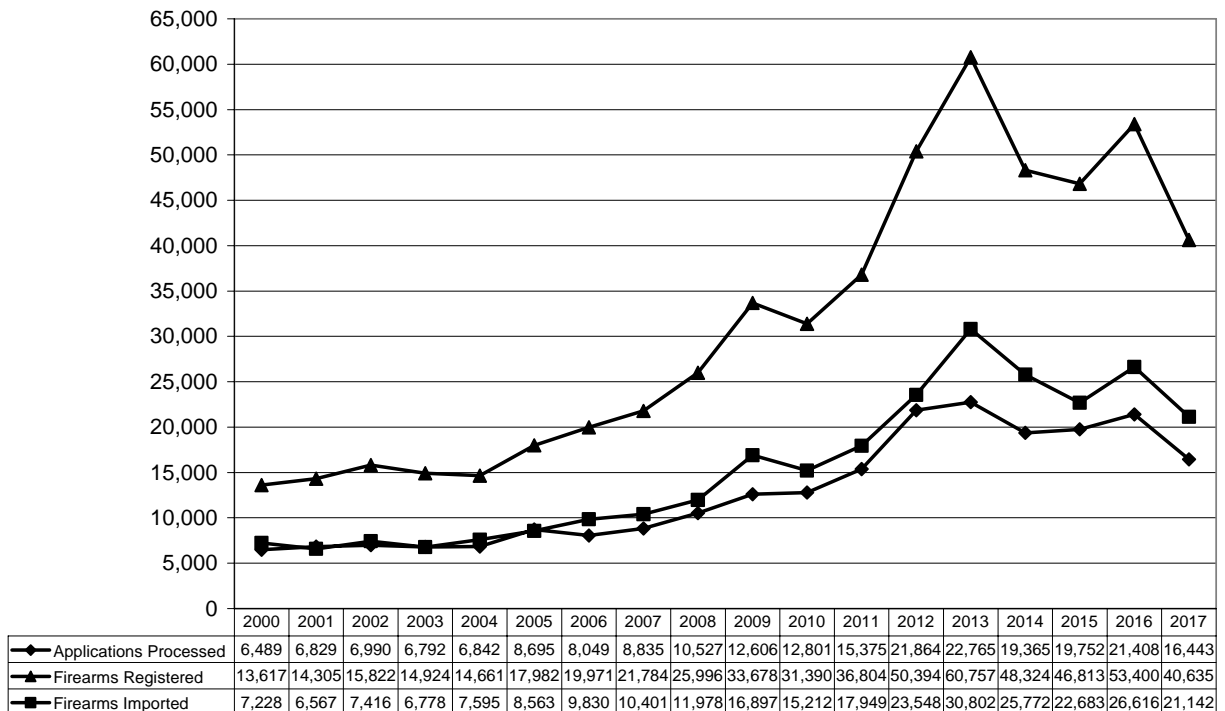
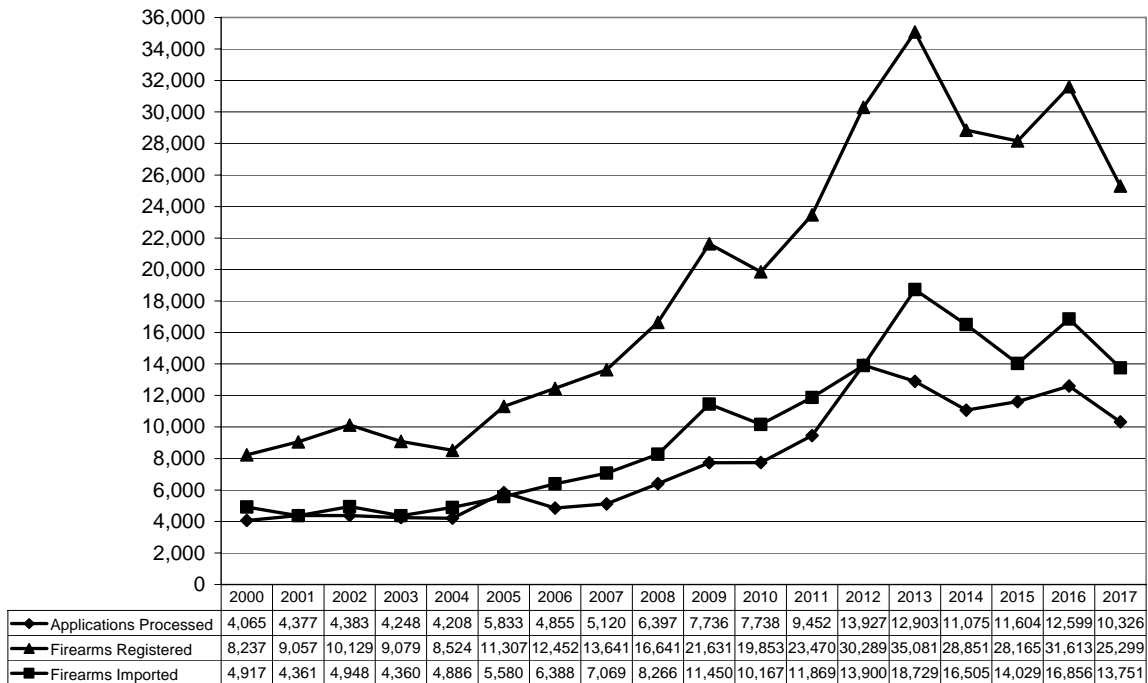


Figure 5 shows that, between 2000 and 2017 in the City and County of Honolulu, the annual tally of permits processed increased 154.0%, the number of firearms annually registered surged 207.1%, and the number of firearms annually imported climbed 179.7%.

**Figure 5: Firearm Registration Trends,
City & County of Honolulu, 2000-2017**



As shown in Figure 6, the number of permits processed annually in Hawaii County during the 2000-2017 period rose 181.2%, the number of firearms annually registered jumped 186.9%, and the number of firearms annually imported skyrocketed 234.5%.

**Figure 6: Firearm Registration Trends,
Hawaii County, 2000-2017**

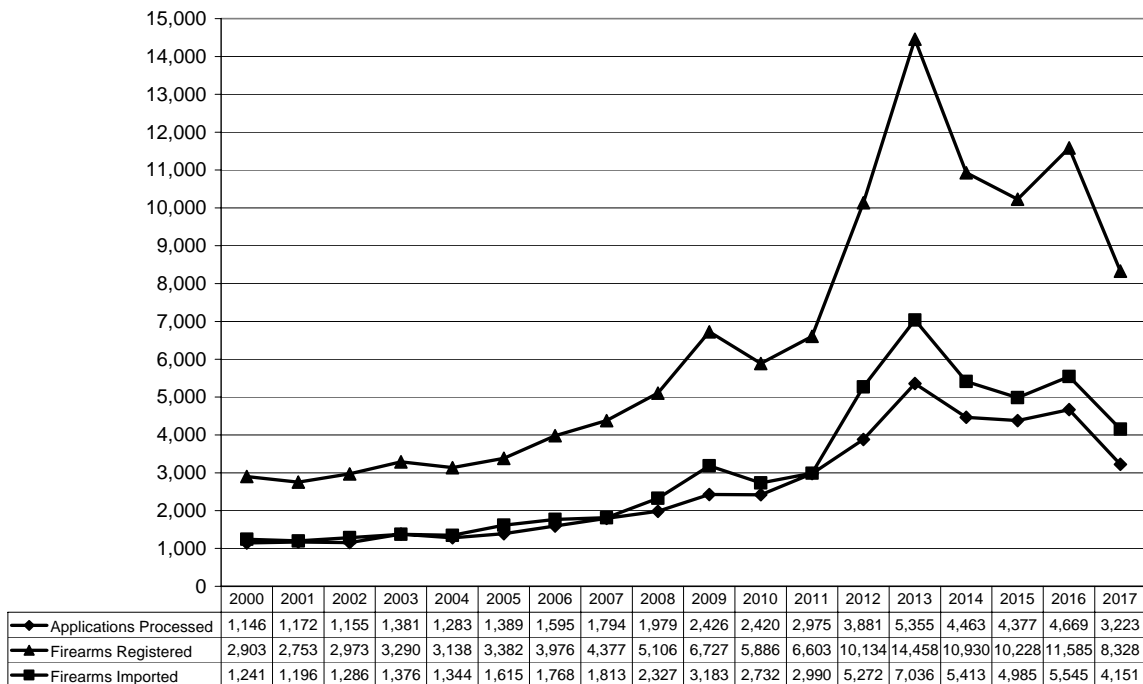
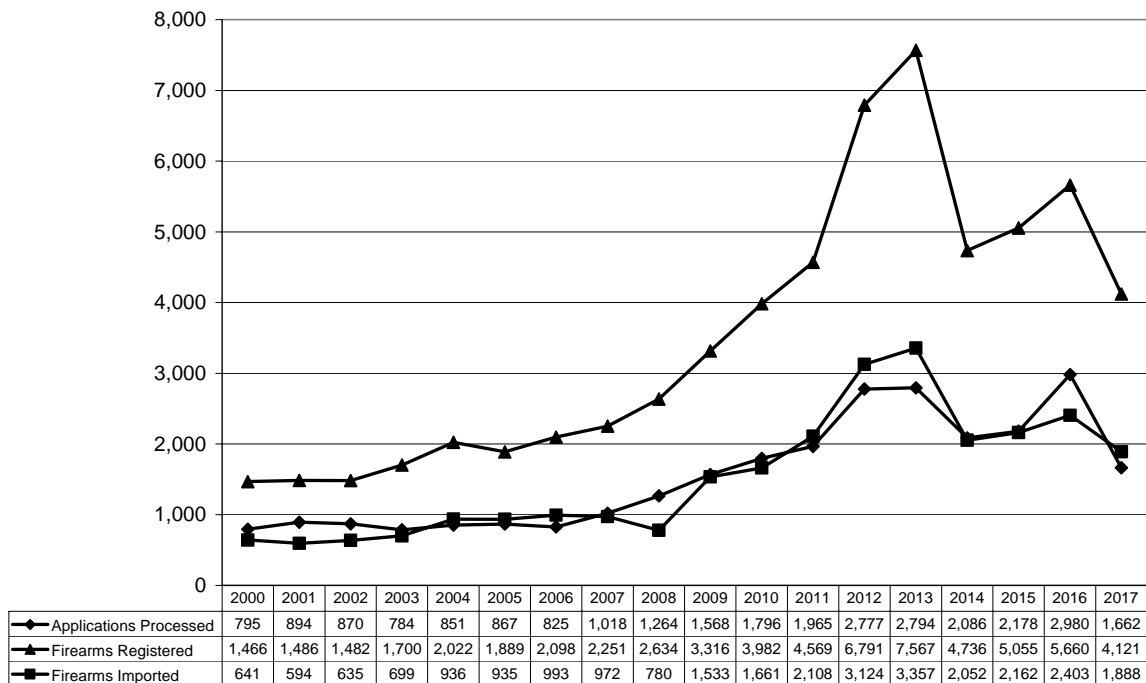


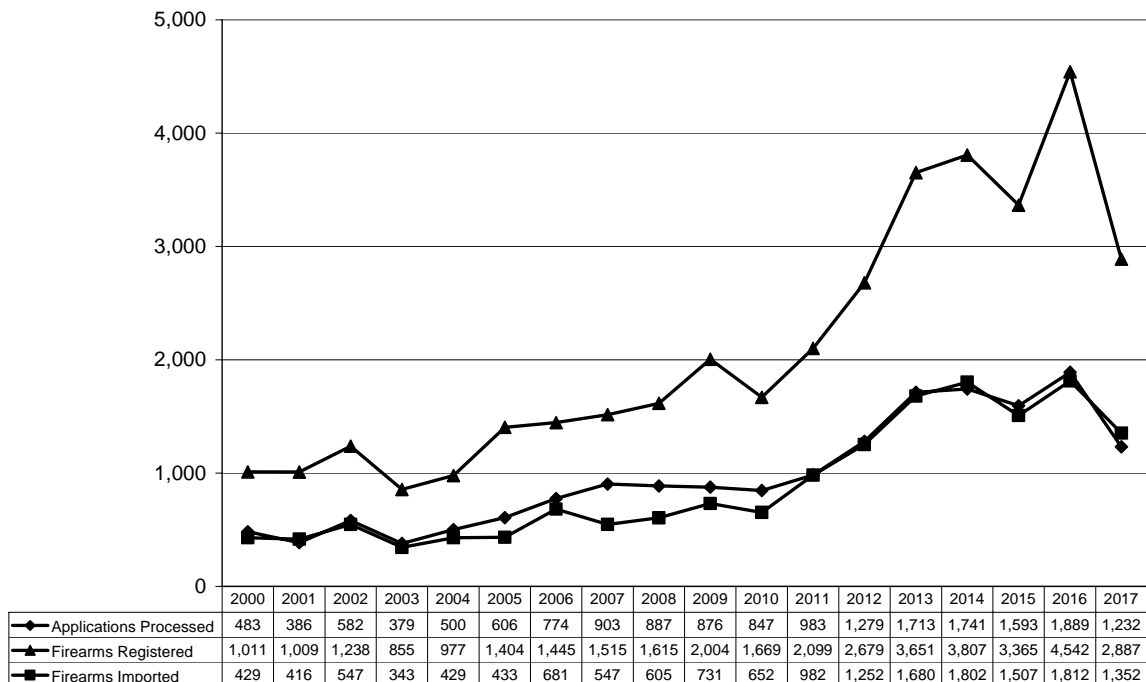
Figure 7 reveals that, between 2000 and 2017 in Maui County, the number of permits processed annually increased 109.1%, the number of firearms annually registered rose 181.1%, and the tally of firearms annually imported jumped 194.5%.

**Figure 7: Firearm Registration Trends,
Maui County, 2000-2017**



As shown in Figure 8, the number of permits processed annually in Kauai County from 2000 through 2017 increased 155.1%, the number of firearms registered climbed 185.6%, and the number of firearms imported soared 215.2%.

**Figure 8: Firearm Registration Trends,
Kauai County, 2000-2017**



Permit Application Denials

As noted earlier, 1.7% (283) of all permit applications in Hawaii during 2017 were denied for cause. The majority of the denials were for longarm (195, or 68.9%) rather than handgun (88, or 31.1%) permit applications. Following a trend since this annual report was first published, longarm permit applications in 2017 were denied at a rate (2.3%) that is more than double the denial rate for handgun permit applications (1.1%).

Roughly one-quarter (67, or 23.7%) of the denials in 2017 were due to the applicants' prior criminal convictions, while 4.2% (12) were due to pending cases.

It is a misdemeanor in the State of Hawaii to provide falsified information on firearm permit applications, unless the falsified information pertains to criminal or mental health histories, in which case it is a felony offense (HRS § 134-17). In 2017, falsified criminal or mental health information, or both, were provided in 41.7% (118) of the 283 denial cases; falsified information pertaining to anything other than criminal or mental health histories was provided in 1.4% (4) of the cases; and no falsified information was provided in 56.9% (161) of the cases.

Table 2 presents broad categorical data on the reasons for denied permit applications.

Table 2: Reasons for Denied Firearm Permit Applications, State of Hawaii, 2017

	#	%*
Mental Health-Related Issue**	139	49.1
"Other" Criminal Offense	69	24.4
Medical Marijuana Patient***	47	16.6
Other Reason (e.g., non-U.S. citizen, dishonorable discharge)	20	7.1
Domestic Violence****	16	5.7
Drug Offense	15	5.3
Restraining/Protective Order	5	1.8
Disqualifying Juvenile Offense	2	0.7

* Figures do not total 100% due to multiple reasons for some denials.

** Includes adverse mental health diagnoses and treatment, and drug or alcohol abuse/addiction and treatment. Denials for such reasons can be satisfactorily resolved with a verified doctor's note stating that the applicant is no longer adversely affected. While an original denial cannot be appealed or overturned, a new application may be submitted and the appropriate permit will be issued.

*** Former medical marijuana patients may successfully apply one year after the expiration of their medical marijuana card.

**** Includes domestic violence-related offenses and counseling/treatment.

Table 3 provides a breakdown of information entered into a description field for each denial.

**Table 3: Descriptions of Firearm Permit Application Denials,
State of Hawaii, 2017**

	283 Total Denials	#	%*
9 felonies + abuse of family/household member		1	0.4
abuse of family/household member		8	2.8
abuse of family/household member - acquitted by reason of insanity		1	0.4
alcohol abuse treatment		7	2.5
assault		15	5.3
assault (domestic-related)		2	0.7
assault + abuse of family/household member + mental health issue/treatment		3	1.1
assault + burglary		1	0.4
assault + mental health issue/treatment		1	0.4
assault + restraining order		2	0.7
assault + restraining order + on felony probation		1	0.4
assault + terroristic threatening		1	0.4
assault x 2		1	0.4
battery (mainland)		4	1.4
burglary		1	0.4
disorderly conduct		4	1.4
disqualifying juvenile offense(s)		2	0.7
drug addiction + medical marijuana card		1	0.4
drug offense		6	2.1
drug offense + sex abuse treatment		1	0.4
DUI (felony-level)		1	0.4
felonies (unspecified)		1	0.4
felony (unspecified)		6	2.1
harassment		6	2.1
harassment + mental health issue/treatment		1	0.4
indecent/sexual contact with child (mainland)		1	0.4
medical marijuana card		46	16.3
mental health issue/treatment		106	37.5
mental health issue/treatment + alcohol abuse treatment		1	0.4
mental health issue/treatment + alcohol and drug dependence		1	0.4
mental health issue/treatment + false info (unspecified) on application		1	0.4
mental health issue/treatment + substance abuse treatment		3	1.1
motor vehicle theft + alcohol abuse treatment		1	0.4
motor vehicle theft + harassment + substance abuse treatment		1	0.4
no response from California re motor vehicle theft arrest		1	0.4
no response from Georgia and Illinois re prior arrests		1	0.4
not a U.S. citizen		1	0.4
positive field test for drug use		3	1.1
resisting arrest		1	0.4
restraining order		2	0.7
sexual assault		6	2.1
spousal battery (mainland)		1	0.4
substance abuse treatment		7	2.5
terroristic threatening		2	0.7
theft		1	0.4
theft + mental health issue/treatment		3	1.1
unknown disposition for unspecified felony arrest		1	0.4
warrant		14	4.9

* Due to rounding, figures do not total 100%.

Licenses to Carry Firearms

Hawaii's county police departments also process license applications for the open and/or concealed carry of firearms in public. Statewide in 2017, 225 employees of private security firms applied for and were issued carry licenses, and there were no denials. A total of 14 private citizens applied for a concealed carry license in 2017, including seven in the City and County of Honolulu, three in Maui County, two in Hawaii County, and two in Kauai County; all applicants were denied by the respective county's police chief.

Confiscations

One "assault pistol," as defined and prohibited by state law, was confiscated by the City and County of Honolulu Police Department in 2017. This was the only confiscation reported by firearm registration personnel statewide for the year.

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared with input and assistance from the county police departments' firearm registration personnel. As the volume of registration activity documented in this report demonstrates, these dedicated professionals work hard to serve their communities.

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Maui County Police Department

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Melanie Wong, Firearms Registration Clerk

Reference

Bureau of Justice Statistics (November 2017). *Background checks for firearms transfers, 2015: Statistical Tables*. U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs. NCJ 250978.