Handguns recovered in crimes have notably different dealer, handgun, and purchaser characteristics compared to guns not recovered in crimes.

Firearm Characteristics
Compared to guns that have not been reported lost or stolen, handguns are:
- 2.99 times more likely to be used in a crime if the gun is reported lost.
- 8.93 times more likely to be used in a crime if the gun is reported stolen.

Firearm characteristics that increase the likelihood of a handgun becoming a crime gun:
- Being an inexpensive handgun, measured by being from a low-cost manufacturer
- A handgun having a medium or large caliber
- A handgun being a semiautomatic
- 2.99 times more likely for alcohol intoxication
- 2.36 times more likely for a major property crime
- 1.88 times more likely for firearm-related crimes
- 2.07 times more likely for firearm-related crimes
- 2.07 times more likely for firearm-related crimes

Purchaser Characteristics
Purchaser characteristics that increase the likelihood of a handgun becoming a crime gun:
- Female sex
- Handgun being the first known handgun purchase by the purchaser
- Purchaser being Black, Hispanic, Native American or Pacific Islander, and other race and ethnicity
- A purchaser’s prior arrests in the past 10 years increases the likelihood of a handgun becoming a crime gun, specifically:
  - 1.88 times more likely for alcohol intoxication
  - 2.10 times more likely for a major violent crime
  - 2.36 times more likely for a major property crime
  - 2.07 times more likely for firearm-related crimes

Dealer Characteristics
Dealer characteristics that increase the likelihood of a handgun becoming a crime gun:
- Dealer’s sales volume
- Percent of a dealer’s prior transactions that were administrative denials
- Percent of sales that were pawns or pawn redemptions in the previous calendar year
- Percent of sales in the past calendar year that became crime guns in the next calendar year

Real-World Implications
These results, in combination with prior studies, provide evidence for strategies to interrupt firearm use in crimes. Measures to secure firearms from theft or loss should be a primary focus for prevention of firearm-related crimes moving forwards.

Read the full study: Robinson et al. Injury Epidemiology 2023. DOI: 10.1186/s40621-024-00491-8