

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




Researchers analyzed records for **5,247,348 handguns** and **2,868,713 long guns** legally purchased in California from 1996 to 2021, **45,247** of which **were recovered in crimes** from 2010 to 2021. Data sources included crime gun recovery records, Dealer Records of Sales, and purchasers' criminal histories.

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

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 dealers' 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.