



ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
New York Field Division

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ATF SHARES NY CITY CRIME GUN DATA *DATA AVAILABLE ON-LINE*

NEW YORK - William G. McMahon, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF), New York Field Division today releases aggregate trace data for crime guns recovered in the New York City region for calendar year 2007.

A review of ATF firearm trace data compiled from Jan.1 to Dec. 31, 2007, for New York City reveals:

- Over 87% of the firearms recovered in New York City and traced to an individual purchaser were purchased in other states.
- Handguns accounted for the number one type of firearm recovered, 83%.
- Where an age of the possessor was provided, 55% were between the age of 18 and 30years old (73% between 18 and 40).

The New York City statistics are posted on the ATF NY web site;
<http://www.atf.gov/field/newyork/index.htm>.

A key component of ATF's enforcement mission is the tracing of firearms on behalf of thousands of Federal, State, local, and foreign law enforcement agencies, yet only about 30% of the crime guns recovered nationwide are submitted to ATF to be traced. However, New York State, since 2002, has had mandatory crime gun tracing through the ATF Crime Gun Center in Brooklyn. The Gun Center is the central repository for recovered and traced firearms in New York and gives ATF and our law enforcement partners an accurate and timely picture of illegal gun trafficking into the state.

Trace data tracks the transfer of a firearm from the importer or manufacturer to the gun's first purchaser. This information can assist law enforcement in ultimately pinpointing the individual(s) who used the gun to commit a crime. ATF conducts traces to identify criminals for prosecution; therefore firearms trace data is considered sensitive criminal intelligence. It is vital that this intelligence be shared with our State and local law enforcement partner to better assist them in investigating and solving violent crimes impacting their communities.

ATF has a proud tradition of supporting our law enforcement partners at every level of government and it is our commitment to continue to provide our partners with the information they need to protect their communities from individuals armed with illegal guns. As noted above, ATF considers trace information as law enforcement sensitive since it is often the first investigative lead in a case. Trace information is treated no differently than fingerprint matches and other crime scene information, since premature disclosure can adversely effect an ongoing investigation and endanger lives.

ATF's long standing policy has been to provide total access to trace results to the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction with respect to the trace request, but to safeguard those results from third parties. This has always been the case in the ATF NY Field Division. Given recent public attention to this topic, it important to clearly state ATF's disclosure policy regarding trace data. Trace information, whether a single firearm recovered, information regarding point of sale for what have been described as crime guns, and aggregate information within specific jurisdictions or necessary parts of investigations, **have been and will continue to be, shared with our partners.** Congress' appropriations restriction simply codifies ATF's longstanding policy of sharing trace data with other law enforcement agencies for the purpose of conducting a criminal investigation. However, neither the appropriations language nor ATF rules prohibit the sharing of trace data with law enforcement agencies conducting criminal investigations within their geographic jurisdiction. **Nor does the restriction prohibit State or local law enforcement from sharing trace data with other jurisdictions.** Additionally, nothing prohibits ATF from analyzing trace data trends and releasing our own reports that law enforcement agencies can use. In fact, ATF uses and shares multi-jurisdictional trace data with law enforcement agencies to identify firearm trafficking trends and leads.

Again, ATF is committed to providing critically important trace data to law enforcement agencies who seek our assistance. To ensure that we furnish the results in a timely manner, we must make certain that our efforts remain focused on criminal investigations, including the analysis of comprehensive crime gun trends and patterns.

New Yorkers can now use the Internet to find specific firearm recovery information and gain some insight into these recoveries by learning about the types of offenses and where firearms were recovered within their state in addition to the rest of the country. A state by state listing is available at http://www.atf.gov/firearms/trace_data/index.htm.

Special Agent in Charge McMahon said, "This Web site allows ordinary citizens to get a glimpse of what their local police departments are up against in battling illegal firearms traffickers. By analyzing trace results ATF can better focus our resources to stop the flow of illegal guns into New York."

More information on ATF and its programs is at www.atf.gov.