

Recovery of Crime Guns in Massachusetts

2018



Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

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Charles Baker, Governor

Thomas Turco, Secretary of the Executive Office of Public Safety and
Security

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Overview

Pursuant to line item 8000-0600 of the fiscal 2018 state budget, the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) was directed to conduct an analysis of section 131Q of chapter 140 of the Massachusetts General Laws to determine: (i) the effectiveness of current reporting mechanisms for lost and stolen guns, including by identifying the number of guns traced to crime that were reported lost or stolen prior to their use in the commission of a crime; and (ii) firearm purchase and sales patterns as they relate to firearms traced to crime, including an analysis of the number of guns traced to a crime that were originally purchased from each licensed gun dealer in the commonwealth or purchased through a secondary private seller. The exact statute reads:

Section 131Q. A firearm, rifle or shotgun, large capacity weapon, machine gun or assault weapon used to carry out a criminal act shall be traced by the licensing authority for the city or town in which the crime took place. The licensing authority shall report statistical data, when the data is readily available as determined by the chief of police, including, but not limited to: (i) the make, model, serial number and caliber of the weapon used; (ii) the type of crime committed; (iii) whether an arrest or conviction was made; (iv) whether fingerprint evidence was found on the firearm; (v) whether ballistic evidence was retrieved from the crime scene; (vi) whether the criminal use of the firearm was related to known gang activity; (vii) whether the weapon was obtained illegally; (viii) whether the weapon was lost or stolen; and (ix) whether the person using the weapon was otherwise a prohibited person.

The data shall be reported to the commonwealth fusion center or the criminal firearms and trafficking unit within the division of investigation and intelligence in the department of state police established pursuant to section 6 of chapter 22C. The colonel of state police shall produce an annual report by December 31 of each year regarding crimes committed in the commonwealth using firearms, rifles or shotguns, large capacity weapons, machine guns or assault weapons, including all of the categories of data contained in this section, and shall submit a copy of the report to the joint committee on public safety and homeland security, the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate and, upon request, to criminology, public policy and public health researchers and other law enforcement agencies.

Methodology and Data Collection

Information on lost or stolen firearms is currently collected in several locations. According to section 29C of chapter 140, in the case of loss, theft or recovery of any firearm, rifle, shotgun or machine gun, a report shall be made forthwith to both the commissioner of the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) and the licensing authority in the city or town where the owner resides. In addition to reporting the lost firearm to DCJIS, a lost or stolen firearm is often reported by the reporting agency to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), a computerized index of criminal justice information hosted by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). When a police officer recovers a firearm, one of the steps they often take is running a check of the serial number through NCIC to determine if the firearm has been

reported lost or stolen. The check will reveal if the firearm is reported lost or stolen and in which jurisdiction the report was made. The officer would then include this information in his entry into the Commonwealth Fusion Center's crime gun tracking system, which was created as a result of chapter 140 section 131Q of the Massachusetts general law. The law directs firearms licensing authorities within the Commonwealth to annually report to the Colonel of the Massachusetts State Police certain data related to crime gun seizures within their jurisdiction.

Data on crime guns being sold or registered in Massachusetts was compiled by comparing serial numbers in the crime gun database against registered firearms in the Massachusetts Gun Transaction Portal and Massachusetts Instant Record Check System (MIRCS) maintained by DCJIS. For the purpose of this analysis, it is possible a firearm that was recovered could have been registered or sold multiple times, thus creating multiple records for a single firearm.

Firearms Reported Lost or Stolen in Massachusetts

Since 2015, jurisdictions have been reporting crime gun seizures to the Commonwealth Fusion Center. As outreach and training continues, the number of contributing agencies increases. In 2016, 9.72% of reported crime guns were reported as lost or stolen as of the time of recovery. In 2017, this number rose to 13.65% and then fell to 11.19% in 2018. Information was received on firearms recovered in 147 different jurisdictions in 2018. In cases where it could be determined whether the firearm was illegally acquired, 68% of the firearms had been acquired illegally.

Figure 1: Status of Crime Guns Reported to Commonwealth Fusion Center				
Status of Crime Gun	2016	2017	2018	Total
Stolen	87	223	199	509
Lost	6	5	13	24
Unknown	863	1,442	1,682	3,987
Total	956	1,670	1,894	4,520
*Data Source: MA Crime Gun Tracking Database				

Massachusetts police agencies reported 1,656 total firearms as lost or stolen to NCIC in 2016 - 2018; this includes all firearms not just crime guns.

Figure 2: Lost or Stolen Firearms Reported to NCIC by MA Agencies				
	2016	2017	2018	Total
Lost or Stolen Firearms	530	597	529	1,656
*Data Source: NCIC				

There were nine agencies reporting ten or more lost or stolen firearms to NCIC:

Figure 3: Agencies Reporting 10 or More Lost or Stolen Firearms	
Agency	Total
New Bedford	37
South Hadley	30
Boston	25
Weymouth	23
Royalston	20
Springfield	19
Holyoke	14
MA State Police	13
Longmeadow	12
Taunton	11
Sutton	10
*Data Source: NCIC	

Crime Guns in MIRCS

Matching serial numbers in the Crime Gun Tracking System against MIRCS resulted in 542 records. This should not be considered 542 individual firearms, but 542 instances where there was a match. For example, it is possible a firearm that was recovered during an aggravated assault, had been purchased from a dealer and then sold or transferred multiple times. The actual number of individual crime guns that were located in MIRCS was 371.

Figure 4: Transaction Type for Crime Guns	
Transaction Type	Total
Loss/Theft	2
Personal Sale/Transfer	72
Registration	11
Sale	457
Total	542
Data Source: DCJIS	

Of the 542 matching records, 461 contained dealer information, while 81 transactions contained personal information of a known seller; these numbers closely mirror the above transaction types. A list of the dealers with a higher volume is below (For a complete list, see Appendix Table 1).

Figure 5: Dealers with 6 or More Transactions Involving Crime Guns		
Dealer Name	Total	Town
FOUR SEASONS	76	Woburn
THE GUN PARLOR	23	Worcester
GUNS INC.	19	West Springfield
R & R GUN SALES	16	Belchertown
MASS FIREARMS SCHOOL	16	Holliston
COLLECTOR'S COIN GALLERY	16	Stoneham
BLUE NORTHERN TRADING COMPANY	14	Ayer
GUNS AND GUN PARTS	10	West Springfield
MICRO ARC WELDING INC	9	Worcester
DAVE'S SPORTING GOODS	9	Pittsfield
DECKER ENTERPRISES INC. DBA/PETES GUN SHOP	8	Adams
ARCHERY AND ARMS LLC OF AUBURN	8	Auburn
THE ORIGINAL BOBS SHOOTING RANGE AND GUN SHOP	7	Salisbury
SHOOTING SUPPLY	7	Westport
CABELAS WHOLESALE INC	7	Berlin
TOMBSTONE TRADING COMPANY	6	Brookfield
THE VILLAGE GUNSMITH	6	Dartmouth
HUNTER'S TRADING POST, LTD.	6	Weymouth
GUNS AND GEAR LLC	6	Agawam
GUN ROOM OF SHREWSBURY INC	6	Shrewsbury
GFA GREGS REPAIR SERVICE	6	Natick
AVID SPORTS	6	Pittsfield

Four Seasons is a gun dealer located in Woburn, Massachusetts. Since the inception of this data collection, they have had the highest number of firearms sold that were recovered during a crime. Four Seasons sells new firearms, used firearms as well as ammunition and supplies. Due to the high number of transactions where Four Seasons was listed as the dealer, it was examined in more detail. Of the 76 transactions, 62 individual crime guns were tied to this dealer. The buyers listed 48 different home towns and firearms were recovered in 28 different jurisdictions (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Jurisdictions Recovering Firearms Purchased at 4 Seasons	
Recovering Jurisdiction	Total
ABINGTON	1
AUBURN	1
BOSTON	25
CHELSEA	2
DRACUT	1
FALMOUTH	1
FITCHBURG	1
FREETOWN	4
HOLLISTON	1
LEICESTER	3
LOWELL	2
LYNN	4
MALDEN	1
MARLBOROUGH	1
NEWBEDFORD	3
OXFORD	1
PLYMOUTH	1
SHIRLEY	5
SPRINGFIELD	1
STONEHAM	2
TEWKSBURY	1
WALTHAM	3
WESTBROOKFIELD	1
WINCHENDON	1
WINCHESTER	1
WOBURN	3
WORCESTER	5
Total	76

Appendix

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FOUR SEASONS	76	Woburn
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GUNS INC.	19	West Springfield
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MASS FIREARMS SCHOOL	16	Holliston
COLLECTOR'S COIN GALLERY	16	Stoneham
BLUE NORTHERN TRADING COMPANY	14	Ayer
GUNS AND GUN PARTS	10	West Springfield
MICRO ARC WELDING INC	9	Worcester
DAVE'S SPORTING GOODS	9	Pittsfield
DECKER ENTERPRISES INC. DBA/PETES GUN SHOP	8	Adams
ARCHERY AND ARMS LLC OF AUBURN	8	Auburn
THE ORIGINAL BOBS SHOOTING RANGE AND GUN SHOP	7	Salisbury
SHOOTING SUPPLY	7	Westport
CABELAS WHOLESALE INC	7	Berlin
TOMBSTONE TRADING COMPANY	6	Brookfield
THE VILLAGE GUNSMITH	6	Dartmouth
HUNTER'S TRADING POST, LTD.	6	Weymouth
GUNS AND GEAR LLC	6	Agawam
GUN ROOM OF SHREWSBURY INC	6	Shrewsbury
GFA GREGS REPAIR SERVICE	6	Natick
AVID SPORTS	6	Pittsfield
WEBSTER LAKE SPORTING INC.	5	Webster
VILLAGE SPORTS	5	Westport
THE SPORTSMANS DEN	5	Quincy
MAGNUM ENTERPRISES, LLC	5	Orange
GRRR GEAR INC	5	Orange
FLINT ARMAMENT, INC	5	Fall River
BASS PRO SHOP	5	Foxborough
ZERO HOUR ARMS	4	South Easton
TRIPLE A GUNS, INC.	4	West Springfield
THE GUN RACK	4	Turners Falls
NORTHEAST TRADING CO, INC.	4	North Attleboro
NICK'S SPORT SHOP INC.	4	Palmer
IMAGING DATA CORPORATION	4	Clinton
HS TRADING INC	4	Auburn
EAST MOUNTAIN WOODWORKING LLP	4	Holyoke
PERSONAL DEFENSE SPECIALISTS INC	3	South Hadley
OUTERLIMITS LLC	3	Holbrook
M & M PLIMOTH BAY OUTFITTERS, INC.	3	Plymouth
LAW ENFORCEMENT EQUIPMENT INC	3	Waltham
FTS GUNS	3	New Bedford
FIRST DEFENSE FIREARMS	3	Uxbridge
VISUAL ARTS EG CAKOUNES	2	Saugus
TITE GROUP SPORTING	2	Northborough
THE GUNRUNNER LLC	2	Middleborough
SPARKY'S GUN SHOP	2	Webster
SMITH & WESSON	2	Springfield
POWDERHORN OUTFITTERS	2	Hyannis
ON TARGET FIREARMS OF DRACUT	2	Dracut
HUNTER'S RENDEZVOUS	2	Pepperell
FAIRHAVEN FIREARMS	2	Fairhaven

Dealer Name	Total	Town
DICK'S SPORTING GOODS #237	2	Dartmouth
DICK'S SPORTING GOODS #175	2	Plymouth
COLLECTOR'S FIREARMS AND MILITARIA	2	Chelmsford
BUCK RUB SPORTING GOODS INC.	2	Orange
WARE GUN SHOP	1	Ware
URBAN TACTICAL SUPPLIES LLC	1	Bourne
TROY CITY TACTICAL	1	Fall River
THE SHOOTERS BOX LLC	1	Malden
THE POWDER KEG	1	Mansfield
THE OUTDOOR SHOP	1	South Yarmouth
THE NORWOOD ARMORY	1	Norwood
TED GANANSKI FIREARMS	1	West Palm Beach
STONEY ACRE SPORTS	1	Sutton
STEVES FIREARM INSTRUCTION LLC	1	Stoughton
ROACH'S SPORTING GOODS	1	Cambridge
RICHIE'S SPORTING SUPPLY	1	Westport
PULLMAN ARMS INC	1	Worcester
PRECISION POINT FIREARMS OF WOBURN	1	Woburn
PARRO'S GUN SHOP	1	Waterbury
OUTBACK ARMS, LLC	1	Plympton
ON TARGET TRAINING INC	1	East Bridgewater
NORTHERN ATLANTIC ENTERPRISES LLC	1	Rehobeth
NORTHEAST TRADING COMPANY	1	North Attleboro
NORTH SHORE FIREARMS, LLC	1	Middleton
NEW ENGLAND BALLISTIC SERVICES INC	1	Hopedale
MINUTEMAN ARMORY	1	Templeton
MINUTE MAN SPORTSMANS CLUB	1	Billerica
MIKE'S GUN SHOP	1	Northborough
MIDDLEBORO GUN SHOP	1	Middleborough
MATCH SHOT	1	Gardner
LIBERTY EQUIPMENT INC	1	Tewksbury
LEBLANC'S GUN SHOP	1	Fitchburg
LAROCCA GUN WORKS INC	1	Worcester
K & R TARGET SPORTS	1	Hudson
JUREK BROTHERS INC.	1	Greenfield
HUNTER'S RENDEZVOUS/ROYAL ARMS	1	Pepperell
GUARDIAN ARMS	1	Westborough
GT ARMS LLC	1	Wareham
GREG DERR PRECISION ARMS	1	Marshfield
GOOSE HUMMOCK SHOP DBA OUTDOOR OUTFITTER INC.	1	Orleans
GILMAN GUNS FFL	1	Milan
GARTMAN ARMS CO INC	1	Wrentham
FREDRIC LOTTER	1	Bourne
FAT CAT SPORTS	1	Bridgewater
FAIRGROUND TRADERS INC.	1	Brockton
EASTMANS SPORT & TACKLE	1	Falmouth
DOWNRANGE INC	1	Hyannis
DOUGLAS AUCTIONEERS	1	Deerfield
DICK'S SPORTING GOODS #255	1	Natick
DICK'S SPORTING GOODS #186	1	Leominster
DICK'S SPORTING GOODS #166	1	Seekonk
DICK'S SPORTING GOODS #162	1	Millbury
DICK'S SPORTING GOODS #151	1	Worcester

Dealer Name	Total	Town
CUSTOM GUN SERVICE	1	Winchendon
COMMONWEALTH FIREARMS & TRAINING CENTER, LTD	1	Somerset
CLASSIC FIREARMS	1	Indian Trail
CAMFOUR, INC	1	Westfield
BRON CLASSIC FIREARMS	1	Sturbridge
BOURNE BRIDGE GUNS & AMMO INC	1	Bourne
B.G. SPORTING INC	1	Westfield
B&K SALES, LLC	1	Natick
AUTO BURST TECH	1	Easton
ATLANTIC TACTICAL	1	Westwood
ARMOR BEARER SPORTS LLC	1	Springfield
ARCHERY PLUS	1	Spencer
AG GUNS	1	Lowell
A&J SPORTING GOODS	1	Housatonic