

Highlights of the CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG City Report Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII)

These findings summarize the trace information for crime guns recovered in the City of Charlotte-Mecklenburg during 1999 and traced in 1999 by law enforcement agencies in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, including the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and ATF. Based on historical trends, judgment, and the informed opinions of ATF agents who work locally with the city police department and Sheriff's Office, ATF determined that Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, was tracing comprehensively in 1999.

Crime Gun Possessors (Table A)

Juveniles (ages 17 & under) were associated with 7 percent of recovered crime guns.

Youth (ages 18 - 24) were associated with 47 percent of recovered crime guns, a higher percentage than the average of 34 percent for comparable YCGII cities.

Adults (ages 25 & older) also accounted for nearly 47 percent of recovered crime guns in Charlotte- Mecklenburg.

Crime Guns and Illegal Diversion

Few Crime Gun Possessors Bought Their Guns Directly from Federally Licensed Gun Dealers. (Table A) Over 92 percent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg crime guns changed hands at least once before reaching the crime gun possessor, and could have been legally transferred, straw purchased, otherwise trafficked, stolen, or a combination of these. Trafficking investigations can determine how these guns were obtained by the crime gun possessor.

Many Crime Guns Had a Short Time-to-Crime. Notwithstanding that most crime guns were bought from an FFL by someone other than their criminal possessor, many crime guns were recovered soon after their initial purchase. A short time from retail sale to recovery in crime, known as time-to-crime, is an indicator of illegal diversion or criminal intent associated with the retail sale. The presence of short time-to-crime guns also shows that many firearm offenses, including violent offenses with firearms, involve new guns.

The median time-to-crime for guns traced from Charlotte-Mecklenburg, where time-to-crime could be determined, was 4.2 years, as compared to the median of 5.7 years for comparable YCGII cities. With many guns that moved quickly from retail sale to recovery by law enforcement, Charlotte-Mecklenburg contains a wealth of investigative opportunities.

- 41 percent of crime guns had a time-to-crime of less than 3 years (32 percent for comparable YCGII cities).
- 21 percent of crime guns had a time-to-crime of a year or less (15 percent for comparable YCGII cities).

Types of Crime Guns (Table C)

Handguns accounted for 76 percent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's traced crime guns.

Semiautomatic pistols comprised 52 percent of crime guns; revolvers, 22 percent.

- Semiautomatic pistols dominated among crime guns recovered from youth (63 percent) and juveniles (61 percent), as well as from adults (45 percent).

Long guns accounted for 24 percent of crime guns recovered in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. By age group, adults were associated with the highest percent (29 percent), followed by youth (18 percent), and juveniles (10 percent).

Officer Safety.

The North China Industries 7.62mm rifle was frequently traced from Charlotte-Mecklenburg. This rifle, as well as most other rifles, will pose an enhanced threat to law enforcement, in part, because of their ability to expel projectiles at velocities that are capable of penetrating the type of soft body armor typically worn by the average police officer.

Most Frequently Traced Crime Guns by Manufacturer and Caliber (Table D)

| Manufacturer | Caliber | Type of Crime Gun |
|------------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Lorcin Engineering | .380 | Semiautomatic Pistol |
| Ruger | 9mm | Semiautomatic Pistol |
| Mossberg | 12 GA | Shotgun |
| Smith & Wesson | .38 | Revolver |
| Rossi | .38 | Revolver |
| Bryco Arms | 9mm | Semiautomatic Pistol |
| Lorcin Engineering | 9mm | Semiautomatic Pistol |
| Marlin | .22 | Rifle |
| North China Industries | 7.62mm | Rifle |
| Maverick Arms | 12 GA | Shotgun |

Most Frequently Traced Fast Time-to-Crime Guns (Table E)

The following frequently traced firearms were recovered in crime within 3 years or less of having been purchased as new guns from a Federal firearms licensee in more than 50 percent of recoveries.

Youth

| Manufacturer | Caliber | Type of Crime Gun |
|--------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Maverick Arms | 12 GA | Shotgun |
| Bryco Arms | 9mm | Semiautomatic Pistol |
| Lorcin Engineering | 9mm | Semiautomatic Pistol |
| Lorcin Engineering | .380 | Semiautomatic Pistol |
| Bryco Arms | .380 | Semiautomatic Pistol |

Adult

| Manufacturer | Caliber | Type of Crime Gun |
|--------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Rossi | .38 | Revolver |
| Lorcin Engineering | .380 | Semiautomatic Pistol |

Geographic Sources (Table F)

In-State. North Carolina Federal firearms licensees (FFLs) were the source of 67 percent of all traceable crime guns recovered in Charlotte-Mecklenberg.

- **In-County.** FFLs located in Mecklenburg County were the source of 47 percent of crime guns recovered in Charlotte-Mecklenberg and purchased in North Carolina.

Regional. Another 12 percent of Charlotte-Mecklenberg's traceable crime guns were first purchased at FFLs in the nearby States of Georgia and Virginia.