Support for the Second Amendment goes hand in hand with keeping guns away from criminals and other dangerous people. But loopholes in the law make it easy for dangerous people in Minnesota to get guns, resulting in needless violence—from deadly domestic abuse to suicide and school shootings. Research shows that common-sense public safety laws reduce gun violence and save lives. This fact sheet brings together the findings of Everytown for Gun Safety’s original investigations and analyses of relevant law enforcement and public health data to illuminate gun violence and crime trends of the illegal gun market in Minnesota.

THE TOLL OF GUN VIOLENCE

- In the last decade of available data, 673 Minnesota residents were murdered with guns, and an additional 83 died in accidental shootings or shootings of undetermined intent.¹
- There is a deadly relationship between guns and violence against women in the United States and Minnesota. In the United States, between 2009 and 2013, 3,078 women were shot to death by current or former intimate partners.² In Minnesota over that period, at least 89 women were shot to death by current or former intimate partners, according to a series of reports from the Minnesota Coalition of Battered Women.³
- Dangerous people who should not have had a gun in the first place commit a significant share of gun violence against police officers. Of law enforcement officers shot to death nationwide in 2013, 52 percent were killed by individuals who were prohibited from possessing firearms.
- Firearms also play a key role in suicides in Minnesota, where over three-fourths (78%) of firearm deaths in the last decade were suicides.⁴ In 2014, 308 Minnesotans committed suicide with a firearm.⁵

2. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 2009-13, available at http://bit.ly/1yVxm4K. Over the last five years of available data, 55% of women killed by intimate partners were killed with guns.
3. This data excludes victims murdered by current or former female intimate partners, children killed by their mother’s current or former intimate partner, interveners and bystanders killed due to intimate partner violence and men killed by a current or former intimate partner of a woman they had a dating or sexual relationship with.
Federal law requires licensed gun dealers to conduct a background check for every firearm purchase. Since its inception, the background check system has blocked more than 2.4 million gun sales to dangerous people, including felons, domestic abusers, and the severely mentally ill.  

In Minnesota alone, the background check system has blocked at least 28,499 gun sales to prohibited people since 1998, including 19,456 to felons, 1,083 to fugitives, and 3,751 to people convicted of domestic abuse misdemeanors or subject to domestic abuse protection orders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minnesota Background Check Denials, 1998-2014</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convicted Felons</td>
<td>19,456</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Abusers</td>
<td>3,751</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibited under State Law</td>
<td>1,708</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlawful User or Addicted to a Controlled Substance</td>
<td>1,226</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fugitive from Justice</td>
<td>1,083</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Indictment</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Aliens</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudicated Mentally Ill</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,499</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PREVENTING GUN VIOLENCE

Suicides Account for the Vast Majority of Firearm Related Deaths in Minnesota

**Firearm Suicides**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Suicide Firearm Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to a study by the Department of Justice, from the inception of the background check system in 1994 through the end of 2012, federal, state, and local agencies conducted more than 147 million firearm applications and denied 2.43 million gun sales to prohibited people. Assuming a similar rate over the period 2013-15, to date the background check system has likely blocked nearly 3 million firearm sales to prohibited people.
Background checks are the most systematic way to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. But under current law in most of the country, background checks are only required for gun sales at licensed dealers. Millions of gun transfers take place between unlicensed, “private” parties—often at gun shows or through anonymous online transactions—and are not subject to background checks.  

This loophole in our background check system is especially dangerous considering the vast, virtual gun show that now exists on the internet. Dozens of websites—like Armslist.com, the self-described Craigslist for guns—each host tens of thousands of ads for unlicensed gun sales and provide a forum for strangers to connect and arrange offline gun transfers, just like Craigslist does for furniture sales and concert tickets. In less than two years, the website Armslist grew by more than sevenfold. And in a recent study of Armslist.com, unlicensed sellers posted more than 13,000 unique ads over a one-year period offering firearms for sale, no background check required.

Criminals are flocking to this loophole to arm themselves. An Everytown investigation in 2013 showed that 1 in 30 would-be buyers on Armslist (3.3 percent) have criminal records that prohibit them from buying guns under federal law. In some states, that share of prohibited buyers is even higher: an Everytown investigation in Washington State found that 1 in 10 prospective buyers there had committed crimes that prohibited them from possessing guns, including individuals convicted of domestic abuse and assaulting police officers.

No single law will stop all gun crime, but expanding the background check system is a proven way to help save lives. In states that require a background check for all handgun sales, there are:

- 46 percent fewer women shot to death by intimate partners,
- 48 percent fewer law enforcement shot to death with handguns,
- 48 percent fewer people killed by firearms suicide,
- 48 percent less gun trafficking, and
- 52 percent fewer mass shootings.
Eighteen states and Washington, DC go beyond federal law and require background checks on all handgun sales. Six states have passed background check laws since the 2012 shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School, including Colorado, Washington, and Oregon. Nevada and Maine will vote on background checks in 2016.

There is a bill in the Minnesota State Legislature that would require a criminal background check for every gun sale, with reasonable exceptions for family transfers, hunting, and self-defense. The background check bill would expand the existing system to make sure that everyone buying a gun in Minnesota passes a criminal background check, no matter where they buy the gun and no matter who sells it to them.

An estimated 98.9 percent of Minnesota residents live within 10 miles of a gun dealer.

Meeting at a licensed gun dealer to complete a background check is easy. There are 1,658 federally licensed gun dealers in Minnesota—more than the number of post offices—and 98.9 percent of Minnesota residents live within 10 miles of a gun dealer.

82 percent of Minnesota residents—including 74% of Minnesota gun owners—support requiring criminal background checks for all gun sales.

There are 1,440 licensed gun dealers in Minnesota, 1.8 times the number of post offices.

---

**Licensed Gun Dealers in Minnesota**


---

**EVERYTOWN FOR GUN SAFETY** is the largest gun violence prevention organization in the country with more than 3 million supporters and more than 85,000 donors including moms, mayors, survivors, and everyday Americans who are fighting for public safety measures that respect the Second Amendment and help save lives. At the core of Everytown are Mayors Against Illegal Guns and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, a grassroots movement of American mothers founded the day after the Sandy Hook tragedy. Learn more at everytown.org and follow us @everytown.

---