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**ATTORNEY GENERAL'S REPORT CONCERNING
ASSAULT FIREARMS 1999**



State of New Jersey
Department of Law and Public Safety
May 2000

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Pursuant to the Assault Firearms Act, *N.J.S.A. 2C:58-14*, information concerning the number and types of criminal offenses involving assault firearms was compiled through procedures established by the Office of the Attorney General and is reported in this Annual Report. This information pertains to any offense involving an assault firearm which was reported to a law enforcement agency within New Jersey.

While this Annual Report includes the data required by the Legislature, this information does not serve as a total measure of the benefits derived from the enactment of the assault firearms law. This law serves to protect the people of this state from the dangers presented by firearms designed to rapidly discharge ammunition capable of killing human beings as well as firearms that are ill-suited and infrequently used for legitimate civilian purposes. The purpose of the assault firearms law is two-fold:

- . To prevent the availability and increase of these firearms by limiting future sales.
- . To reduce the number of these firearms in circulation.

Criminal Offenses Involving Assault Firearms

With the enactment of the Assault Firearms Act, *N.J.S.A. 2C:58-14*, in 1990, the Division of State Police Uniform Crime Reporting Unit implemented procedures for reporting offenses committed with or involving assault firearms. Pertinent information, including the offense committed, the date of the offense, and the case number, is reported monthly by the original investigating law enforcement agency. This information is reported on a standardized form developed by the State Police.

This current report provides a compilation of data collected from the effective date of the Act, May 30, 1990 through October 31, 1999. In addition to the narrative highlights presented concerning the number and types of criminal offenses involving assault firearms, detailed data is provided in accompanying tables. Moreover, a brief description of a few of the crimes that contribute to the statistics involving assault firearms is also provided.

Criminal incidents are reported by most serious Uniform Crime Report (UCR) tracked offense. When an episode is reported as an unlawful possession of an assault firearm, that means only that unlawful possession is the most serious UCR-tracked crime. For example, incidents involving both narcotics violations and possession of an assault firearm are reported as unlawful possession of a firearm. Incidents involving murder or robbery and possession of an assault firearm are reported as murder or robbery, respectively. Moreover, each criminal incident is reflected once, although an incident may involve numerous victims, several perpetrators or defendants and separate crimes. While some arrest information is available through specific, individual police reports obtained to provide examples of incidents involving assault firearms, no statewide standardized system exists through which arrest or clearance rates are reported.

From May 30, 1990, the effective date of the Assault Firearms Act, through October 31, 1999, a total of 869 criminal offenses involving assault firearms have been reported statewide (Table 1).

The total 869 offenses included: 21 murders; 163 armed robberies; 103 aggravated assaults; 572 unlawful possession of firearms; and 10 other offenses (Table 1).

Table 1
Criminal Offenses Involving
Assault Firearms
by County

May 30, 1990 - October 31, 1999

County	Murder	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Unlawful Possession Weapon	Other	Total
Atlantic	-	2	6	39	-	47
Bergen	2	3	4	34	-	43
Burlington	-	2	1	40	-	43
Camden	4	13	12	70	3	102
Cape May	-	-	-	9	-	9
Cumberland	1	-	5	10	-	16
Essex	5	115	49	118	1	288
Gloucester	-	1	3	18	1	23
Hudson	2	7	1	28	1	39
Hunterdon	-	-	1	9	-	10
Mercer	1	7	3	9	2	22
Middlesex	2	2	5	38	-	47
Monmouth	-	2	2	14	-	18
Morris	1	-	1	14	-	16
Ocean	-	1	2	29	1	33
Passaic	2	1	4	16	1	24
Salem	-	-	1	11	-	12
Somerset	-	2	-	13	-	15
Sussex	-	-	-	6	-	6
Union	1	5	3	38	-	47
Warren	-	-	-	9	-	9
STATEWIDE	21	163	103	572	10¹	869

¹ Other includes the following offenses: six unlawful sale of assault firearms offenses, two criminal mischief offenses, one conspiracy to commit murder, and one sexual assault.

Table 2
Criminal Offenses Involving
Assault Firearms
by County

November 1997 - October 1998

County	Murder	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Unlawful Possession Weapon	Total
Atlantic	-	-	-	4	4
Bergen	-	-	-	1	1
Burlington	-	-	-	2	2
Camden	2	-	-	7	9
Cape May	-	-	-	2	2
Cumberland	-	-	-	4	4
Essex	1	1	-	10	12
Gloucester	-	-	1	1	2
Hudson	-	-	-	2	2
Hunterdon	-	-	-	2	2
Mercer	1	-	-	1	2
Middlesex	-	1	1	6	8
Monmouth	-	1	1	5	7
Morris	-	-	-	5	5
Ocean	-	-	-	3	3
Passaic	-	-	-	2	2
Salem	-	-	-	-	-
Somerset	-	-	-	-	-
Sussex	-	-	-	1	1
Union	-	-	-	8	8
Warren	-	-	-	1	1
STATEWIDE	4	3	3	67	77

During the previous report year, November 1997 through October 1998, a total of 77 assault firearms offenses were reported statewide: 4 murder; 3 robberies; 3 aggravated assaults; and 67 unlawful possession of assault firearms offenses (Table 2).

Table 3
Criminal Offenses Involving
Assault Firearms
by County
November 1998 - October 1999

County	Murder	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Unlawful Possession Weapon	Total
Atlantic	-	-	-	4	4
Bergen	-	-	-	3	3
Burlington	-	-	-	4	4
Camden	-	-	2	7	9
Cape May	-	-	-	1	1
Cumberland	-	-	1	-	1
Essex	1	4	2	13	20
Gloucester	-	-	1	2	3
Hudson	-	-	-	1	1
Hunterdon	-	-	-	2	2
Mercer	-	1	-	2	3
Middlesex	-	-	-	2	2
Monmouth	-	-	-	1	1
Morris	-	-	-	3	3
Ocean	-	-	-	4	4
Passaic	-	-	1	1	2
Salem	-	-	-	-	-
Somerset	-	-	-	1	1
Sussex	-	-	-	-	-
Union	-	1	2	3	6
Warren	-	-	-	-	-
STATEWIDE	1	6	9	54	70

During the most recent report year, November 1998 through October 1999, a total of 70 assault firearms offenses were reported statewide: 1 murder; 6 robberies; 9 aggravated assaults; and 54 unlawful possession of assault firearms offenses. (Table 3).

Table 4
Criminal Offenses Involving
Assault Firearms
Statewide Yearly Summary²

	Murder	Robbery	Unlawful Aggravated Assault	Possession Weapon	Other	Total
Nov. 1990 - Oct. 1991 ³	5	28	21	55	1	110
Nov. 1991 - Oct. 1992	2	12	15	76	2	107
Nov. 1992 - Oct. 1993	3	16	23	64	1	107
Nov. 1993 - Oct. 1994	1	48	5	64	-	118
Nov. 1994 - Oct. 1995	3	8	8	76	1	96
Nov. 1995 - Oct. 1996	1	12	7	60	2	82
Nov. 1996 - Oct. 1997	1	13	10	41	1	66
Nov. 1997 - Oct. 1998	4	3	3	67	-	77
Nov. 1998 - Oct. 1999	1	6	9	54	-	70
TOTAL	21	146	101	557	8 ⁴	833

² Reflects six annual periods, November 1st through October 31st. Does not include the initial four and one-half month period (May 30, 1990 - October 15, 1990) immediately following the effective date of the Assault Firearms Act. The data for that period was reported in the initial report filed as required by statute within 180 days of enactment of the Act. The data for that period is, however, reflected in the total reported in Table 2.

³ Because of reporting and data compilation practices used in 1990, this report period includes the two-week period, October 16, 1990 through October 31, 1990, along with the one-year period November 1990 through October 1991.

⁴ Includes six unlawful sale of an assault firearms offenses, one conspiracy to commit murder, and one criminal mischief.

Summarized below are some of the facts of a few of the offenses that contribute to the crime statistics involving assault firearms and weapons with large capacity ammunition magazines or folding stocks. These descriptions provide a more complete picture of the nature of the problem. These assault firearms offenses were reported for the most recent report year, November 1998 through October 1999.

- . Police responded to a domestic violence call where the victim was assaulted by a male with a gun. The subject was arrested for aggravated assault and the following weapons, including an assault firearm, were confiscated: a Heckler and Koch M3 Super 90 12 gauge pump shotgun with a pistol grip, loaded with six shells, and a Colt Anaconda .44 mag. loaded with five hollow point bullets.
- . Two victims, while entering a mini-mart parking lot, were approached by three subjects in a Honda vehicle. Two of the subjects, one of which was armed with a machine gun, exited the vehicle and robbed the victims of their wallets, cash and jewelry. The subjects fled in their vehicle. Two days later, a second incident occurred involving three subjects having a description similar to the subjects committing the original incident. During this incident, the victim attempted to flee and was shot in the rear thigh area of both legs. Following their investigation, police located the subjects' vehicle, a stolen Honda, and recovered a Mak 90 assault weapon. Subjects were subsequently arrested.
- . As people were leaving a restaurant at closing time, several shots were fired from a passing vehicle. Subsequently, police stopped a vehicle matching the description of the vehicle involved in the shooting incident. During the stop, police observed the butt of a handgun (a Taurus 9 mm handgun) in the magazine pouch located behind the driver's seat. A further search of the vehicle revealed a Cobray Mac11 9mm machine gun, an assault weapon, under the driver's seat.
- . Following a motor vehicle stop, as police attempted to question the driver, he became difficult and increasingly agitated. When the driver/subject became physical toward the officers, the subject was arrested and handcuffed. After the arrest, officers searched the vehicle for weapons and contraband and found a Intratec 22 automatic pistol (assault weapon) in the subject's vehicle. The weapon, capable of fully automatic fire, was loaded with 20 hollow point bullets and seven solid point rounds.
- . Police were dispatched on report of shots fired. Upon their arrival at the scene, officers found that two victims were robbed at gunpoint as they exited their parked vehicle. The robbery subjects were reportedly armed with a Uzi machine gun and two automatic handguns. After being physically assaulted and threatened with the assault weapons, the victims were robbed of their cash and jewelry.





