



Research Exposes Dangerous Flaws in State Concealed Handgun Permit Systems

Multiple news outlets and research organizations have closely examined concealed carry permit systems in place in many states and found a variety of dangerous flaws. The nation's premier research center—the National Academies of Science—found no evidence that concealed carry reduces crime rates.

- A 2013 analysis by the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* of permit applicants who were initially denied a permit to carry in Minnesota and successfully appealed found that applicants with histories of domestic violence, assaults, and weapons violations were granted permits on appeal. The analysis showed that at least 299 people deemed too dangerous or otherwise unfit for a carry permit were able to obtain them on appeal to the sheriff or a judge since 2003.¹
- A December 2011 investigation by *The New York Times* analyzing North Carolina's concealed carry permit system found more than 2,400 permit holders who were convicted of felonies or misdemeanors, excluding traffic-related crimes, over a five-year period and more than 200 who were convicted of felonies, including at least 10 who committed murder or manslaughter. The *Times* research found that more than 200 permit holders were convicted of gun- or weapon-related felonies or misdemeanors, including approximately 60 who committed weapon-related assaults. The *Times* also reported that in about half of the felony convictions, authorities failed to revoke or suspend the permit, even in cases of murder, rape, and kidnapping.²
- A 2007 in-depth review conducted by the *Florida Sun-Sentinel* of Florida's concealed carry law found that Florida's licensing system had granted concealed carry permits to: more than 1,400 people who had pleaded guilty or no contest to a felony; 216 people with outstanding warrants; 128 people with active domestic violence injunctions; and, six registered sex offenders.³
- Research in 2008 by the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* found that Tennessee's concealed handgun permitting system has armed dozens of people with violent criminal histories, including a man convicted of sexually assaulting his ex-girlfriend and then, armed with an assault rifle and a handgun, abducting her. The newspaper identified 70 residents of Shelby County, Tennessee, who were issued permits despite arrest histories that included robbery, assault, and domestic violence. The paper cited one case in which a permit holder had 25 arrests on his record when he obtained his concealed carry permit. He was later the subject of federal charges for a series of bank robberies. The newspaper's research also found that individuals with felony convictions were issued concealed carry permits because of administrative flaws within the state agencies that issued the permits.⁴
- A 2009 investigation by *The Indianapolis Star* of Indiana's concealed handgun system found that many dangerous individuals were granted concealed handgun permits, including: one man who pressed the barrel of a loaded handgun into the chest of a woman holding her one-year-old son; another man whose handgun was confiscated by police three times (twice for firing the weapon in public); and, a man who had been arrested for allegedly dealing crack cocaine and was later accused of beating his girlfriend. The investigation found that "in all of these cases— and hundreds of other questionable ones uncovered by *The Indianapolis Star*—the Indiana State Police granted that request [for a concealed carry permit], often over the objections of the local police department and even though, in some cases, it appears the State Police had a legal obligation to deny the permit. Even worse, many of those people committed subsequent crimes, some with the guns they were legally permitted to carry."⁵
- A 2011 investigation of Michigan's concealed handgun law by *Booth* newspapers uncovered serious problems with the law's reporting requirements including: incomplete records; spotty compliance by counties under a duty to report; and, unreported criminal convictions. Specific problems identified included instances where licenses were reinstated after convictions when they were supposed to be

**PREEMINENT RESEARCH
INSTITUTION REJECTS
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REDUCE CRIME—**

In 2004 the **National Research Council’s Committee on Law and Justice** determined that studies—such as those conducted by pro-gun researcher John Lott—indicating a relationship between concealed carry laws and overall crime rates were not reliable.

Specifically, the Committee carefully examined Lott’s data and research methods and concluded “that with the current evidence it is not possible to determine that there is a causal link between the passage of right-to-carry laws and crime rates.”⁷

revoked. One county revoked just one license in nine years because of a procedural misunderstanding. The report stated, “Countless other cases are unaccounted for, either because county licensing boards are not notified of the outcome of criminal charges, or they neglect to take action. Revocations are not completed, so they never show up in public reports.”⁶

■ A 2010 audit of Colorado’s concealed handgun permit database by the Office of the State Auditor found serious inaccuracies and inconsistencies that could endanger law enforcement personnel. For example, the database was woefully incomplete in that only 55 percent of CCW handgun permits issued in Colorado were represented in it. Of the 32,000 records that were in the database, 63 percent contained inaccuracies or inconsistencies: 11,000 (22 percent) had incorrect expiration dates; 18,000 (35 percent) had no expiration date listed at all; and, 2,000 (four percent) were duplicate records. These flaws greatly diminished the utility of the database to police who relied on the information to: help keep officers safe by making them aware of persons that may have a gun; share information among law enforcement personnel about persons whose behavior may render them ineligible to possess a permit; and, verify the validity of a permit when law enforcement comes into contact with a permit holder who is carrying a concealed handgun.⁸

■ Beginning in 1998, the Violence Policy Center conducted four studies analyzing the operation of Texas’ concealed carry law. The final VPC study, *License to Kill IV: More Guns, More Crime*, was completed in 2002 and incorporated the findings of the previous three studies. It found that from 1996 to 2000, Texas concealed handgun permit holders were arrested for weapon-related offenses at a rate 81 percent higher than that of the general population of Texas aged 21 and older. These weapon-related offenses included: 279 arrests for assault or aggravated assault with a deadly weapon; 671 arrests for unlawfully carrying a weapon; and, 172 arrests for deadly conduct/discharge firearm.⁹

¹ “Appeals of denied permits get guns into questionable hands,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, February 18, 2013, <http://www.startribune.com/permit-appeals-get-guns-in-questionable-hands/191555661/>

² “Guns in Public and Out of Sight,” *New York Times*, December 26, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/27/us/more-concealed-guns-and-some-are-in-the-wrong-hands.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all.

³ “In Florida, it’s easy to get license to carry gun,” *Orlando Sentinel*, January 28, 2007, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2007-01-28/news/MGUNS28_1_carry-a-gun-license-to-carry-concealed.

⁴ “Felons slip through cracks in system to carry firearms,” *The Commercial Appeal*, August 3, 2008, <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2008/aug/03/wrong-fingers-are-on-the-triggers>; “Armed and dangerous: Dozens with violent histories received handgun carry permits,” *The Commercial Appeal*, March 12, 2009, <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2009/mar/12/armed-and-dangerous-tennessee-gun-debate-prone>.

⁵ “Should these Hoosiers have been allowed to carry a gun in public?,” *The Indianapolis Star*, October 11, 2009, <http://www.indystar.com/article/20091011/NEWS14/910110365>.

⁶ “Special report: Concealed gun law turns 10 years old,” MLive.com, June 26, 2011, http://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2011/06/special_report_concealed_gun_l.html.

⁷ National Academy of Sciences, *Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review* (2004), Chapter 6, http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=10881&page=120.

⁸ Colorado Office of the State Auditor, *Concealed Handgun Permit Database, Colorado Bureau of Investigation, Department of Public Safety: Performance Audit, November 2010*, <http://goo.gl/L2Ppj3>.

⁹ Violence Policy Center, *License to Kill IV: More Guns, More Crime* (2002), <http://www.vpc.org/studies/ltk4cont.htm>.