



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on January 3, 2012

December Gun Sales Break Single-Month Record

While iPods, Kindles, and Angry Bird stuffed animals were some of the hottest items of the 2011 Christmas season, December saw record-breaking numbers for gun sales, as droves of Americans found firearms and ammunition under their Christmas trees. According to FBI statistics, gun dealers requested more than 1.5 million background checks to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System in December, the highest single-month figure since the statistics first began being recorded.



Nearly 500,000 of those took place in the six days before Christmas and an astounding 102,222 background checks were administered on December 23 alone, the second-busiest single day in history. However, the actual total may have been even higher if individual buyers purchased more than one gun each, because exact sales are not recorded or reported. The FBI indicates that there is not a one-to-one correlation between background checks and the total number of guns sold because of "varying state laws and purchase scenarios."

USA Today [reported](#):

For the first 11 months of 2011, the FBI did a record 14.6 million checks, an increase of more than 70% from the 8.5 million in 2003. Kentucky led the nation, with more than 2 million background checks conducted through November, double the No. 2 gun-check state, Texas. The Bluegrass State, with a population of about 4.3 million, has been tops in background checks the past five years and has the most checks of any state since 1998 — more than 12.6 million.

The surge in gun sales has provoked an array of explanations, including theories that the stale economy has incited crime waves or that buyers are scrambling to gun shops because they fear that tighter firearm regulations are just over the horizon. The National Rifle Association (NRA) suggested that self defense has become a growing concern, as tight local budgets are spurring a decline in the number of employed police officers. "I think there's an increased realization that when something bad occurs it's going to be between them and the criminal," NRA spokesman Andrew Arulanandam [told](#) CNN.

Gun owner Jerry Green of Douglasville, Georgia, attributes the spike in sales to stagnant economic growth and the country's stubbornly high unemployment. "People are desperate these days with the economy," he [said](#). "There's a lot more robberies due to that and we just feel like we need to have ourselves protected in case something does happen."

Jim Irvine of the Buckeye Firearms Association offered several explanations, including "relaxed conceal-and-carry laws in Ohio, more women learning about guns and the pro-gun message resonating." He added, "Owning a gun for self-defense is like owning a fire extinguisher or smoke detectors for safety. All of the fears about all of the nonsense about guns, they're really myths that are falling by the wayside."



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Dave LaRue, part-owner of Legendary Guns in Phoenix, Arizona, said Christmas sales climbed a whopping 25 percent this year. "There are a lot of people concerned about pending gun legislation and the sense about the current administration," he affirmed. "People think future availability will be limited and there's a feeling of 'get it while you can.'"

However, some anti-gun groups object to these theories, asserting that current gun owners are simply hoarding more firearms due to political propaganda hawked by the NRA. "The research we've seen indicates fewer and fewer people are owning more and more guns," argued Caroline Brewer, Director of Communications for the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, an activist group which promotes federal and state gun laws and regulations. "All the trends indicate the number of Americans who own guns has declined."

Further, Brewer contended, "It would appear because of fear-mongering by the NRA since Obama's election that people are adding more guns to their arsenals out of fear Obama and the Democrats will take away their guns, which is absurd." Toby Hoover, executive director of the Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence, echoed a similar sentiment:

It's a false sense of security, but they might go purchase a gun... I'm bothered by, especially at the holiday time, how many people think that these things ought to be holiday gifts, Christmas gifts for their families and their children. We're seeing more of that, which means it's becoming sort of an accepted thing. Firearms and weapons don't seem to go with holidays and peacefulness to me. I think we have a problem.

Of course, Hoover seems to assume that new gun owners plan to use their new Christmas gifts for criminal acts, and not for self defense or recreational purposes. In reality, countless studies have [found](#) that an increase in the number of gun registrations, in fact, leads to reduced crime rates.

Photo: Mac Tilton, owner of [MT Guns](#)



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