

NICS Firearm Background Checks: Month and Year by State and Type

Each column represents the type of transaction submitted to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). In addition, each type of transaction is broken down by the type of firearm—handgun, long gun, and other. The types of firearms are defined by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives as follows:

- Handgun—(a) any firearm which has a short stock and is designed to be held and fired by the use of a single hand; and (b) any combination of parts from which a firearm described in paragraph (a) can be assembled.
- Long Gun—a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder, and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of the explosive in (a) a fixed metallic cartridge to fire a single projectile through a rifled bore for each single pull of the trigger; or (b) a fixed shotgun shell to fire through a smooth bore either a number of ball shot or a single projectile for each single pull of the trigger.
- Other—refers to frames, receivers, and other firearms that are neither handguns nor long guns (rifles or shotguns), such as firearms having a pistol grip that expel a shotgun shell, or National Firearms Act firearms, including silencers.

The transaction types indicated in yellow on the chart are for background checks initiated by an officially-licensed Federal Firearms Licensee (FFL) or criminal justice/law enforcement agency prior to the issuance of a firearm-related permit or transfer. The indication of “multiple” denotes a background check where more than one type of firearm is associated to a single background check and “admin” denotes the administrative checks that are for other authorized uses of the NICS.

Other types of transactions are explained below:

- Pre-Pawn—background checks requested by an officially-licensed FFL on prospective firearm transferees seeking to pledge or pawn a firearm as security for the payment or repayment of money, prior to actually pledging or pawning the firearm.
- Redemption—background checks requested by an officially-licensed FFL on prospective firearm transferees attempting to regain possession of a firearm after pledging or pawning a firearm as security at a pawn shop.
- Returned/Disposition—background checks requested by criminal justice/law enforcement agencies prior to returning a firearm in its possession to the respective transferee, to ensure the individual is not prohibited.
- Rentals—background checks requested by an officially-licensed FFL on prospective firearm transferees attempting to possess a firearm when the firearm is loaned or rented for use off the premises of the business.
- Private Sale—background checks requested by an officially-licensed FFL on prospective firearm transferees attempting to possess a firearm from a private party seller who is not an officially-licensed FFL.
- Return to Seller-Private Sale—background checks requested by an officially-licensed FFL on prospective firearm transferees attempting to possess a firearm from a private party seller who is not an officially-licensed FFL.

It is important to note that the statistics within this chart represent the number of firearm background checks initiated through the NICS. They do not represent the number of firearms sold. Based on varying state laws and purchase scenarios, a one-to-one correlation cannot be made between a firearm background check and a firearm sale.

