

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

September 28, 2021
8.4

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO COUNCIL MOTION, FILE NO. 21-0899

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. It is recommended that the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and ACCEPT the attached Fact Sheet response to the Public Safety Committee regarding the impact of ghost guns in the City.
2. It is recommended that the Board TRANSMIT to the Public Safety Committee the attached Fact Sheet.

DISCUSSION

On August 10, 2021, the Los Angeles City Council Public Safety Committee submitted a Motion that the Department report back to the Council with current data on the impact of ghost guns in the City. The instruction was to include, but not be limited to the number of non-serialized firearms confiscated from individuals and recovered at crime scenes, as well as the number of shootings and homicide cases in which non-serialized ghost guns were involved. Gang and Narcotics Division has prepared the attached fact sheet as directed.

If you have any questions, please contact Captain Anthony Oddo, Commanding Officer, Gang and Narcotics Division, at (213) 833-3700.

Respectfully,



MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

Attachment

INTRADPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

September 1, 2021
8.4

TO: Chief of Police

FROM: Chief of Detectives

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO COUNCIL MOTION, FILE NO. 21-0899

Attached for your approval and signature is an Intradepartmental Correspondence addressed to the Board of Police Commissioners and a corresponding fact sheet responding to the Los Angeles City Council Public Safety Committee's (PSC) Council Motion No. 21-0899.

In the attached fact sheet, Gang and Narcotics Division, addressed the following request stemming from the PSC's motion:

1. Report back to Council with current data on the impact of ghost guns in the City of Los Angeles, including but not limited to the number of non-serialized firearms confiscated from individuals and recovered at crime scenes, as well as the number of cases, shootings and homicides in which non-serialized ghost guns were involved.

If there are any questions, feel free to contact Captain Anthony Oddo, Commanding Officer, Gang and Narcotics Division, at (213) 833-3700.

Respectfully,



KRIS E. PITCHER, Deputy Chief
Chief of Detectives

Attachments

Fact Sheet
Impact of Ghost Guns in the City
September 28, 2021

OVERVIEW

The Public Safety Committee recently requested a report on the impact of ghost guns in the City, including, but not limited to the number of non-serialized firearms confiscated from individuals and recovered at crime scenes, as well as the number of cases, shootings, and homicides in which non-serialized ghost guns were involved.

BACKGROUND

The proliferation of self-made, non-serialized firearms, or **ghost guns**, has increased exponentially over the last year.

- “Ghost Gun” defined – A firearm generally home-made from a piece of polymer plastic or metal that needs only minor modifications to make it an operable firearm. The ghost gun bears no firearm manufacturer’s mark or serial number.
- Terminology used:
 - LAPD – Ghost Gun
 - Other Agencies - Privately Manufactured Firearms
 - Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) – Firearm Made from an Unfinished Receiver or Frame
- The construction of a polymer 9mm ghost handgun takes approximately 30 minutes to two hours.
- Ghost guns are unregulated firearms with no background checks required.
- The largest ghost gun manufacturer since 2013 is the company Polymer 80, Inc. located in Nevada.
- Other companies besides Polymer 80 sell unfinished firearm frames.
- In December 2020, the ATF conducted a search warrant on Polymer 80 and located 10,000 unfinished frame kits for shipping.

Many of these firearms are used in violent crimes within the City.

- Homicides have increased 25 percent from last year as of August 24, 2021.
- January - June 2019 (131 homicides), compared to same period of 2021 (178 homicides) + 35 percent increase.
- Shootings with victims hit have increased 35 percent from last year.
- 2021 YTD Crimes Involving ghost guns: 24 murders, 8 attempted murders, 60 assaults with deadly weapons (ADWs), and 20 armed robberies.

Fact Sheet
Impact of Ghost Guns in the City
September 28, 2021

RECOVERY DATA

- During 2020, the Department recovered 813 ghost guns (596 recovered July-December).
- January to June 2021, the Department recovered 863 ghost guns.
- Ghost guns are an epidemic not only in Los Angeles but nationwide.
- A Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department report showed 2,507 ghost guns were recovered nationally in 2017, versus 8,712 in 2020.

LEGISLATIVE PREPARATION/STRATEGIES

- Maintain current ghost gun-related reports such as Property Reports, Crime and Arrest Reports to support new legislation.
- Prepare the Gang and Narcotics Division Gun Unit Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) for new Bill proposals.
- Support enhancements for ghost gun possession (target criminals versus law-abiding citizens).
- Focus on law enforcement/District Attorney's Office association and victim's rights groups to support new laws impacting ghost gun manufacturing, sales and possession.

FINAL THOUGHTS

- The Department has had an approximate 400 percent increase in ghost gun recoveries since 2017, and the current trend shows these figures will continue to grow exponentially.
- Assault-style rifles account for 6 percent of crime guns, while 9mm semi-automatic handguns account for over 60 percent.
- 3D printing, which allows the printing of firearm components to include lower receivers, has proven viable and is becoming more common and accessible with advancements in technology.
- Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) industrial machines located in Mexico are carving out AR-15 rifle lower receivers in large quantities. The lower receiver is the most important part of the rifle, and additional parts to complete the rifle can be easily obtained online.
- Ghost guns are replacing firearms people would normally purchase, with no background checks required.
- Ghost guns are real, they work, and they kill.

The City of San Diego has enacted an ordinance dubbed "Eliminate Non-Serialized Untraceable Firearms" or ENUF. The measure prohibits buying, selling or possessing the frame of an unfinished gun unless it has a serial number, essentially treating the unfinished part like a completed firearm.

Fact Sheet
Impact of Ghost Guns in the City
September 28, 2021

On Tuesday, August 10, 2021, City Councilpersons Paul Koretz and Paul Krekorian introduced a motion to request an ordinance prohibiting the possession, purchase, sale, receipt and transportation of ghost guns in Los Angeles. The Department is strongly in support of the ordinance to impact the manufacture, sales, and/or possession of ghost guns in the City.

MOTION

In 2013, a mass shooting near Santa Monica City College took the lives of six people and injured four more. In 2014 a bank robbery in Stockton and a shooting spree in rural Tehama County in 2017 killed six. In 2019, a 16-year-old killed two students and injured three others before killing himself at a school in Santa Clarita. And the next year, as protests over police violence filled city streets, Steven Carrillo used a machine gun to shoot two security guards at a federal building in Oakland and a sheriff's deputy in an ambush in Santa Cruz. All of these shootings were committed using 'ghost guns' – weapons that are assembled from parts or kits that include one unfinished piece, typically the frame or receiver, which is the part of the gun regulated under federal law.

The kits, which cost between \$400 and \$525 come in cardboard boxes containing steel barrels, plastic frames, and a number of small plastic and metal parts. Because the parts are not finished guns, they mostly escape California's gun control laws and, once assembled, have a feature that distinguishes them from manufactured weapons: no serial number. Not only will the assembled guns have no serial numbers, but because they are sold as unfinished kits they are exempt from laws requiring background checks and waiting periods. There are no federal restrictions on who can buy ghost gun kits, how many kits or parts someone can purchase, and they are intentionally marketed as unregulated and untraceable to appeal to persons prohibited from purchasing firearms legally.

Sending a wave of weapons without serial numbers or known purchasers onto our streets creates obvious dangers, and officials say the number of these guns has soared. In 2020, Carlos A. Canino, the Special Agent in charge of the ATF Los Angeles Field Division noted that 41 percent of cases are turning up ghost guns, and last month, during an announcement of a new federal strike force launched by the U.S. Department of Justice focused on disrupting the illegal flow of weapons into Los Angeles and the sale of ghost guns locally, LAPD Chief Michel Moore said these guns now account for a third of all weapons recovered by the Department.

The ease with which these guns can be ordered and assembled, and the difficulties in tracing them have made them readily available throughout California. At the same time, shootings and homicides have surged since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and Los Angeles has been no exception. As of July, 2021 homicides were up nearly 30 percent over last year and shootings were up 43 percent. The city ended 2020 with 350 homicides, the most in a decade. Ghost guns have been a "significant influencer" in the surge of gun crime, according to Chief Moore, "because they give criminals who aren't allowed access to firearms the ability to get weapons."

The City of San Diego recently approved an ordinance that prohibits buying, selling or possessing the frame of an unfinished gun unless it has a serial number — essentially treating the unfinished part like a completed firearm. A violation would be a misdemeanor. The City of Los Angeles should follow suit.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Attorney be requested to draft an ordinance prohibiting the possession, purchase, sale, receipt and transportation of non-serialized, unfinished frames and unfinished receivers, and non-serialized firearms with the City of Los Angeles.

AUG 10 2021



I FURTHER MOVE that the Los Angeles Police Department, with the assistance of the City Attorney as needed, be instructed/requested to report back to Council in 14 days with current data on the impact of ghost guns in the City of Los Angeles, including but not limited to the number of non-serialized firearms confiscated from individuals and recovered at crime scenes, as well as the number of cases, shootings and homicides in which non-serialized ghost guns were involved.

PRESENTED BY:



PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, 5th District



PAUL KREKORIAN
Councilmember, 2nd District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL

AUG 10 2021