

Table 6.35

State and Federal prisoners reporting prior possession of firearms

By type of firearm, United States, 1997

Type of firearm	Percent of prisoners					
	Armed during current offense		Ever armed while committing offense		Ever used or possessed firearm	
	State	Federal	State	Federal	State	Federal
Firearm ^a	18.4%	14.8%	25.1%	20.0%	46.9%	48.9%
Handgun	15.3	12.8	21.3	17.2	36.0	38.6
Rifle	1.3	1.3	2.0	1.9	12.4	14.6
Shotgun	2.4	2.0	3.5	3.0	13.7	15.6
Other	0.5	0.6	1.1	0.9	2.7	2.3
No firearm	81.6	85.2	74.9	80.0	53.1	51.1

Note: Data for State prisoners are from the 1997 Survey of Inmates in State Correctional Facilities (SISCF), conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). Data for Federal prisoners are from the 1997 Survey of Inmates in Federal Correctional Facilities (SIFCF), conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for BJS and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. From June through October 1997, prisoners were interviewed about their current offenses and sentences, criminal histories, family and personal backgrounds, gun possession and use, prior drug and alcohol use and treatment, educational programs, and other services provided while in prison. Similar surveys of State prisoners were conducted in 1974, 1979, 1986, and 1991; Federal prisoners were surveyed for the first time in 1991. The samples for the 1997 surveys were taken from a universe of 1,409 State prisons and 127 Federal prisons enumerated in the 1995 Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities or opened between completion of the census and June 30, 1996. The sample design for both surveys was a stratified two-stage selection process; first selecting prisons, and second, selecting prisoners in those prisons. A total of 14,285 interviews were completed for the State survey, and 4,041 for the Federal survey, for overall response rates of 92.5% and 90.2% respectively.

^aDetail does not add to total with firearms because prisoners may have possessed more than one firearm.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Firearm Use by Offenders*, Special Report NCJ 189369 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, November 2001), p. 2, Table 1.