

Gun Policy & Law Enforcement: Survey Results

PoliceOne's Gun Policy & Law Enforcement survey was conducted between March 4 and March 13, 2013, receiving 15,595 responses from verified police professionals across all ranks and department sizes.

1. Are you either current or	former/retired Law Enforcement?	
	Response Percent	Response Count
Current	76.2%	12,271
Former/Retired	18.7%	3,008
Neither	5.2%	834
	answered question	16,113

2. What is (or was) the size	of your department?	
	Response Percent	Response Count
1-25	18.1%	2,739
26-100	26.5%	4,010
101-250	16.4%	2,482
251-500	10.8%	1,631
501-1000	8.8%	1,330
1000+	19.3%	2,917
	answered question	15,109

3. What is (or was) your highest rank? Response Response Percent Count Officer 4,605 30.5% Sergeant 20.4% 3,083 Lieutenant 9.0% 1,359 Deputy 7.8% 1,172 Chief 4.8% 729 Asst. Chief 1.6% 235 Captain 3.8% 571 Commander 1.2% 179 Sheriff 0.7% 109 Detective 9.8% 1,487 Other (please specify) 10.5% 1,580 answered question 15,109

4. What effect do you think the passage of the White House's currently proposed legislation would have in improving police officer safety?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Significant	3.0%	438
Moderate	8.6%	1,255
None	60.6%	8,878
Negative	24.6%	3,597
Unsure	3.2%	474
	answered question	14,642

5. What effect do you think a federal ban on manufacture and sale of some semi-automatic firearms, termed by some as "assault weapons," would have on reducing violent crime?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Significant	1.6%	227
Moderate	6.0%	885
None	71.0%	10,397
Negative	20.5%	3,004
Unsure	0.9%	129
	answered question	14,642

6. Do you think a federal ban on manufacture and sale of ammunition magazines that hold more than 10 rounds would reduce violent crime?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	2.7%	391
No	95.7%	14,013
Unsure	1.6%	238
	answered question	14,642

7. Do you think that a federal law prohibiting private, non-dealer transfers of firearms between individuals would reduce violent crime?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	11.5%	1,684
No	79.7%	11,663
Unsure	8.8%	1,295
	answered question	14,642

8. Do you think increasing the severity of punishments for gun trafficking, particularly by unlicensed dealers or "straw purchasers" who buy arms for persons ineligible to own them, would reduce instances of gun crime?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		58.8%	8,610
No		28.7%	4,205
Unsure		12.5%	1,827
	а	nswered question	14,642

9. Should citizens be required to complete a safety training class before being allowed to buy a gun?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, for all weapons	42.3%	6,147
Yes, but only for certain weapons	14.4%	2,087
No	43.3%	6,281
	answered question	14,515

10. Would requiring mental health background checks on prospective buyers in all gun sales from federally-licensed dealers reduce instances of mass shooting incidents?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	31.3%	4,536
No	44.8%	6,504
Unsure	23.9%	3,475
	answered question	14,515

11. Do you support the concept of a national database tracking all legal gun sales?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	23.0%	3,334
No	70.0%	10,155
Unsure	7.1%	1,026
	answered question	14,515

12. How big a problem do y	ou feel gun crime is in your jurisdiction?	
	Response Percent	Response Count
Significant	16.1%	2,317
Average	44.1%	6,326
Small	39.8%	5,706
	answered question	14,349

13. Do you believe that use of a firearm while perpetrating a crime should result in stiff, mandatory sentences with no plea bargains? Response Response Percent Count Yes 91.4% 13,117 770 No 5.4% Unsure 3.2% 462 answered question 14,349

14. What is your opinion of some law enforcement leaders' public statements that they would not enforce more restrictive gun laws in their jurisdictions?

	Respons Percent	-
Very Favorable	48.89	% 7,004
Favorable	22.29	% 3,181
Unfavorable	9.69	% 1,382
Very unfavorable	7.29	% 1,029
Unsure/Neutral	12.29	% 1,753
	answered questio	n 14,349

15. If you were Sheriff or Chief, how would you respond to more restrictive gun laws?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Not enforce and join in the public, vocal opposition effort	44.9%	6,440
Not enforce and quietly lead agency in opposite direction	17.2%	2,468
Enforce and publicly support the proposed legislation	7.9%	1,132
Enforce and quietly lead agency in support of legislation	10.0%	1,440
Unsure	20.0%	2,869
	answered question	14,349

16. Do you believe gun buyback or turn-in programs can be or have been effective in reducing the level of gun violence?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	11.2%	1,592
No	81.5%	11,574
Unsure	7.3%	1,034
	answered question	14,200

17. Do you have an active 'open carry movement' — individuals and groups carrying firearms as means of political statement — in your jurisdiction?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		34.2%	4,862
No		65.8%	9,338
	ans	swered question	14,200

18. Whether or not you have an active 'open carry movement' in your jurisdiction, what is your opinion about the concept and practice?

	Response Percent	Response Count
I support both concept and practice	31.1%	4,416
It is a valid concept but the practice is misguided	40.8%	5,796
In both concept and practice open carry is a bad idea	18.2%	2,590
Unsure/Neutral	9.8%	1,398
	answered question	14,200

19. Do you support the concealed carry of firearms by civilians who have not been convicted of a felony and/or not been deemed psychologically/medically incapable?

	Respons Percent	•
Yes, without question and without further restrictions	91.3	% 12,968
No, only law enforcement officers should carry firearms	4.1	% 586
Unsure/Neutral	4.5	% 646
	answered question	n 14,200

20. On a scale of one to five — one being low and five being high — how important do you think legally-armed citizens are to reducing crime rates overall:

	Response Percent	Response Count
1	4.7%	665
2	4.9%	701
3	14.0%	1,981
4	21.7%	3,082
5	54.7%	7,771
	answered question	14,200

21. What would help most in preventing large scale shootings in public? Choose the selection you feel would have the most impact:

	Response Percent	Response Count
Improved background screening to determine mental wellness of gun purchasers	14.0%	1,966
Longer prison terms for gun-related violent crimes	7.9%	1,105
More aggressive institutionalization for mentally ill persons	19.6%	2,749
More legislative restrictions on "assault weapons" and ammo magazines	0.9%	128
Tighter limits on weapons sales and transfers	1.5%	214
More armed guards/paid security personnel	15.8%	2,220
More permissive concealed carry policies for civilians	28.8%	4,035
Other (please add)	11.4%	1,605
	answered question	14,022

22. Considering the particulars of recent tragedies like Newtown and Aurora, what level of impact do you think a legally-armed citizen could have made? Choose the statement that you feel is most accurate:

	Response Percent	Response Count
Innocent casualties would likely have been avoided altogether	6.2%	865
Casualties would likely have been reduced	80.0%	11,215
There would have been no difference in outcome	4.1%	568
An active gunfight might have resulted in greater loss of innocent lives	5.5%	767
Unsure or prefer not to answer	4.3%	607
	answered question	14,022

23. Do you support arming teachers and/or school administrators who volunteer to carry at their school? Choose the statement you most agree with:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, if they are vetted, trained, and qualified annually		76.6%	10,745
Yes, if they pass a one-time police-level proficiency check		4.7%	662
No, only sworn school resource officers should be armed		15.8%	2,219
No, our schools should be considered 'gun free zones'		1.5%	212
Unsure/No		1.3%	184
	ans	wered question	14,022

24. Do you carry a firearm o	off duty?		
		Response Percent	Response Count
Always		59.9%	8,399
Usually		23.7%	3,324
Sometimes		12.3%	1,729
Rarely		2.4%	342
Never		1.6%	226
		answered question	14,020

24. Do you think proposed new legislation setting a limit on magazine capacity would negatively affect you?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	67.6%	9,311
No	27.2%	3,743
Unsure	5.2%	720
	answered question	13,774

26. Do you regularly do firearms proficiency training with your setup (assuming a different weapon, holster, carry position, etc. than on duty)?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I train regularly	66.6%	9,171
Yes, I train sometimes	30.2%	4,154
No, I don't train for off duty	3.3%	449
	answered question	13,774

27. If you do all the abovementioned training, do you also train your family members? Response Response Percent Count Yes, we train extensively, including 19.6% 2,695 visualizations/rehearsals. Somewhat. We have talked about possible scenarios and their 63.2% 8,712 responsibilities. No, we haven't spent much time training together for off-duty 17.2% 2,367 incidents. answered question 13,774

28. What do you believe is the biggest cause of gun violence in the United States?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Pop culture influence (eg. violent movies, video games)	13.9%	1,941
Parole, early release, and short sentencing for violent offenders	14.7%	2,052
Guns are too prevalent and easy to obtain	4.4%	611
Poor identification and treatment of mentally ill individuals	10.1%	1,416
Decline in parenting and family values	38.1%	5,330
Economic factors/income inequality	1.6%	223
Unsure	2.4%	340
Other (please specify)	14.8%	2,064
	answered question	13,977

About the Survey

PoliceOne's Gun Policy & Law Enforcement survey was conducted between March 4 and March 13, 2013. More than 15,000 officers completed the survey, which was promoted by PoliceOne exclusively to its 400,000 registered members, comprised of verified law enforcement professionals. Only current, former or retired law enforcement personnel were eligible to participate in the survey. The survey sample size was broadly distributed by geography and rank in proportion to the U.S. law enforcement community at large. Respondents comprised a variety of ranks from departments of all sizes, with the majority representing departments of greater than 500 officers. Of those that took the survey, 80 percent were current law enforcement officers and 20 percent were former/retired law enforcement.