



Violence Policy Center

1025 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 1210
Washington, DC 20036

202.822.8200 voice
202.822.8205 fax
www.vpc.org web

The Glock Pistol: A Favorite of Mass Shooters

“The types of shooting we do...require students to hit multiple small, moving, reactive targets under human reaction times. Since handgun rounds only poke holes in people, we like to use pistols that allow us to poke holes where we want them, as fast as needed, without changing magazines every seven rounds.”

—Tactical shooting instructor quoted in 2011 Glock catalog describing “America’s default pistol”

May 2022

Introduction

The high-capacity Glock pistol stands as a stark example of the gun industry’s marketing of increased lethality. Since the mid-1980s, increased firepower and capacity have defined the products of the gun industry—of both U.S. and foreign manufacture.

Glock Pistols and Mass Shooters

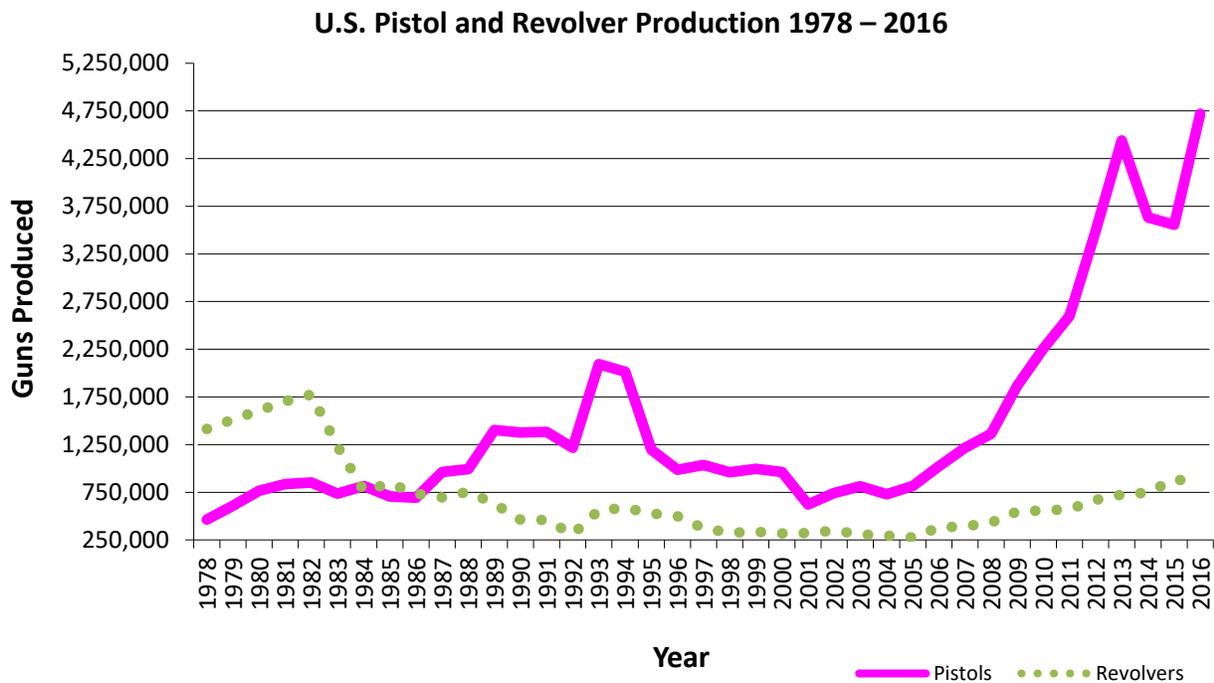
Glock pistols have been part of the arsenals of the some of the most infamous mass shooters in the United States, including: the 2015 attack at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, that left nine dead; the 2011 attack at a Safeway in Tucson, Arizona, that left six dead and 13 wounded—including then-U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords; and, the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting which left 33 dead and 17 wounded. Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh was illegally carrying a 45 caliber Glock pistol when he was stopped by law enforcement after the 1995 bombing for driving a car without a license plate. For examples of mass shootings in the United States that involved Glock pistols, please see the chart below.

Examples of Mass Shootings in the United States Involving Glock Pistols		
Mass Shooting Incident	Casualties	Firearm(s)
Don Carter Lanes bowling alley Rockford, Illinois December 26, 2020 Shooter (alleged): Duke Webb	3 dead, 3 wounded	.40 Glock pistol .380 Glock pistol
Chicago Mercy Hospital Chicago, Illinois November 19, 2018 Shooter: Juan Lopez	4 dead (including shooter)	Glock 17 pistol
Borderline Bar & Grill Thousand Oaks, California November 7, 2018 Shooter: Ian David Long	13 dead (including shooter)	Glock 21 pistol
Multiple parking lots Kalamazoo Michigan February 20, 2016 Shooter (alleged): Jason Dalton	6 dead, 2 wounded	Glock 19 pistol Walther P99 9mm pistol
Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church Charleston, South Carolina June 17, 2015 Shooter: Dylann Roof	9 dead	Glock .45 Model 41 pistol

Examples of Mass Shootings in the United States Involving Glock Pistols		
Mass Shooting Incident	Casualties	Firearm(s)
Apartment complex Hialeah, Florida July 26, 2013 Shooter: Pedro Vargas	6 dead	Glock 17 pistol
Sikh Temple Oak Creek, Wisconsin August 5, 2012 Shooter: Wade Michael Page	7 dead (including shooter), 2 wounded	Glock 9mm pistol
Safeway parking lot Tucson, Arizona January 8, 2011 Shooter: Jared Loughner	6 dead, 13 wounded	Glock 19 pistol
Virginia Tech Blacksburg, Virginia April 16, 2007 Shooter: Seung-Hui Cho	33 dead (including shooter), 17 wounded	Glock 19 pistol Walther P22 pistol
Xerox Office Building Honolulu, Hawaii November 2, 1999 Shooter: Byran Uyesugi	7 dead	Glock 17 9mm pistol
Thurston High School Springfield, Oregon May 21, 1998 Shooter: Kip Kinkel	4 dead, 22 wounded	Glock 9mm pistol .22 Sturm Ruger rifle .22 Sturm Ruger pistol
Connecticut State Lottery Headquarters Newington, Connecticut March 6, 1998 Shooter: Matthew Beck	5 dead (including shooter)	Glock 9mm pistol
Luby's Cafeteria Killeen, Texas October 16, 1991 Shooter: George Hennard	24 dead (including shooter), 20 wounded	Glock 9mm pistol Sturm Ruger P-89 9mm pistol

Increased Lethality: The Gun Industry's Switch from Six-Shot Revolvers to High-Capacity Pistols

In the 1980s, a very significant shift in gun design and marketing occurred: high-capacity semiautomatic (firing one round per trigger pull) pistols became the dominant product line. Looking at the United States, the most lucrative civilian handgun market in the world, prior to the 1980s the most popular handgun design was the revolver, most often containing six shots. In 1980, semiautomatic pistols accounted for only 32 percent of the 2.3 million handguns produced in America. The majority were revolvers. By 1991 this number had reversed itself, with semiautomatic pistols accounting for 74 percent of the 1.8 million handguns produced that year. In 2016, more than 4.7 million pistols were produced in the United States, accounting for 85 percent of the 5.6 million handguns produced that year.



The dominance of the semiautomatic pistol greatly increased the firepower in civilian hands. Not only are semiautomatic pistols capable of rapid fire, they utilize high-capacity ammunition magazines and can be quickly reloaded. The combination of these features makes semiautomatic pistols efficient killing machines. As 2010 catalog copy for the Glock 19 states, “comparable in size and weight to the small .38 revolvers it has replaced, the...Glock 19 is significantly more powerful with greater firepower and is much easier to shoot fast and true.” Described as “America’s default pistol” in an article in the company’s 2011 catalog, one tactical shooting instructor quoted states, “The types of shooting we do...require students to hit multiple small, moving, reactive targets under human reaction times. Since handgun rounds only poke holes in people, we like to use pistols that allow us to poke holes where we want them, as fast as needed, without changing magazines every seven rounds.”

U.S. Pistol and Revolver Production, 1978 to 2016

Year	Pistols	Revolvers
1978	463,426	1,413,651
1979	609,635	1,514,645
1980	764,451	1,605,192
1981	835,167	1,702,062
1982	853,444	1,775,179
1983	733,814	1,233,022
1984	814,234	766,317
1985	706,542	843,529
1986	692,977	734,650
1987	963,562	695,270
1988	991,011	754,711
1989	1,402,660	628,765
1990	1,376,399	462,496
1991	1,381,325	456,941
1992	1,216,174	309,044
1993	2,093,186	562,292
1994	2,014,336	586,450
1995	1,195,266	527,664
1996	985,533	498,944
1997	1,036,077	370,428
1998	960,365	324,390
1999	995,446	335,784
2000	962,901	318,960
2001	623,070	320,143
2002	741,514	347,070
2003	811,660	309,364
2004	728,511	294,099
2005	815,475	275,323
2006	1,021,260	382,069
2007	1,216,479	391,334
2008	1,387,129	431,753
2009	1,868,258	547,195
2010	2,258,450	558,927
2011	2,598,133	572,857
2012	3,487,883	667,357
2013	4,441,726	725,282
2014	3,633,454	744,047
2015	3,557,199	885,259
2016	4,720,075	856,291
Total	57,958,207	26,728,756

A wide variety of extended ammunition magazines are available to increase the firepower of Glock pistols. A 26-round extended magazine for the 45 caliber Glock model 21 is available at Brownells, which also sells many other large-capacity Glock magazines. The Brownells listing highlights the enhanced firepower such magazines deliver:

Why should only 9mm Glock shooters get to double their firepower? KCI's 26-round Glock 21 magazine gives you twice the number of rounds of .45 ACP as the standard factory mag. OK, it does stick out more from the magwell, but how much can you complain when precious range time is interrupted less often to change mags?

Glock History

According to the Violence Policy Center book *Making a Killing: The Business of Guns in America*:

Gaston Glock never made a gun before the mid-1980s. He began his career as an engineer, and in 1963 formed the company of Glock Ges.m.b.H in his hometown of Deutch-Wagram, near Vienna. The company started out making doorknobs and hinges, then moved into military and police hardware (grenades, entrenching tools, etc.), combining high quality synthetic materials and special steels. In 1980, the Austrian Army announced a competition for a new standard sidearm. Gaston Glock assembled a panel of experts and produced a prototype Glock Model 17 9mm pistol, a distinctive combination of "polymers" (also known to most of us as "plastic") and steel. That pistol won the Austrian Army competition in 1982, and Glock was airborne on the wings of the ensuing contract.

Gaston Glock soon turned his eyes to the United States, opened Glock, Inc., "the company's United States beachhead" in the Atlanta, Georgia, suburb of Smyrna, and went after the American law enforcement market.

Glock's pursuit of U.S. law enforcement agencies was central to its deliberate strategy first to gain the prestige of such sales, and then to use them in its marketing campaign to sell to civilians. "It was a conscious decision to go after the law enforcement market first," Gaston Glock said. "In marketing terms, we assumed that, by pursuing the law enforcement market, we would then receive the benefit of 'after sales' in the commercial market."

The strategy worked so well that by 1995 the company was downplaying advertising and was chronically back-ordered. According to the company, in that year there were half a million Glock pistols in use throughout North America (meaning mostly in the United States). Twenty thousand of these were issued by law enforcement agencies—eighty percent of Glock, Inc.'s production was going to civilians and twenty percent to law enforcement.

To this day, Glock continually and consistently touts its origins as a military sidearm and a choice of law enforcement in its advertising and catalog copy. Beneath the headline “Crossover to Confidence,” an ad contained in its *Annual 2018* (a yearly catalog presented as a faux magazine) for the company’s “all new Glock 19X” states that the handgun was “[o]riginally designed for the military.” Another ad in the catalog shows two law enforcement officers, one with a holstered Glock, above the tag line: “Armed with Confidence.”

CROSSOVER TO CONFIDENCE

PRESENTING THE ALL-NEW GLOCK 19X

Originally developed for the military, the GLOCK 19X marries a full-size frame with a compact slide. The G19X may look different than other GLOCK pistols, but the guts are pure GLOCK engineering. With a smoother trigger pull, the GLOCK Marksman Barrel, ambidextrous slide stop levers, and a durable nPVD finish, the G19X delivers the most accurate, reliable shooting experience on the market.

GLOCK 19X AUSTRIA 9x19

GLOCK PERFECTION **19X**

learn more at: us.glock.com/19X

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In an article in its *Annual 2017* catalog, “Hollywood Glocks: The Most Recognizable Firearms in Television and Cinema,” the company brags how the “powerful reputation that GLOCK holds in the law enforcement and military communities” increases the gun’s use in television and film, aiding its marketing efforts. The article notes, “At this time, there are over 270 movies and 200 television episodes that have featured a GLOCK Safe Action Pistol, and that trend is showing no signs of stopping.”

LEGAL EASE

MAS TALKS CALI GLOCKS

AN EASY GUIDE ON WHAT IS LEGAL FOR LAW-ABIDING, GUN TOTING CALIFORNIANS... AT LEAST FOR NOW!

ARTICLE BY MASSAD AYOOB

Mas generally uses a subcompact GLOCK in California. This pace-setter qualification was shot with his stock GLOCK 26.

Gail Pepin Photo

And in an article titled “Mas Talks Cali Glocks: An Easy Guide on What is Legal for Law-Abiding, Gun Toting Californians...at Least for Now!” in the company’s *2017 Annual*, author Massad Ayooob, details Glock handguns that can be purchased under the state’s Unsafe Handgun Act. The article includes a sidebar of “California Approved Glocks.” In the article, he cites the use of Glock pistols by a wide range of California law enforcement agencies.

For more information contact Violence Policy Center Legislative Director Kristen Rand at (202) 822-8200 x102 or krand@vpc.org.