

DETACHABLE MAGAZINE REPORT

1990 - 2021

NSSF® DETACHABLE MAGAZINE REPORT (1990 – 2021)



PURPOSE

Estimate the number of detachable firearm magazines, segmented by capacity, that have been sold and made available using the latest information (2023 initial study period). Estimate the number of magazines provided “in the box” with firearms made available to consumers along with secondary market / direct consumer purchase of firearm magazines. This is done as part of NSSF’s ongoing industry research to provide insights into the firearm and ammunition industry.



METHODOLOGY

Utilize Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Annual Firearms Manufacturers Export Reports (AFMER) to identify firearm manufacturers and corresponding firearm manufacturing activity of pistols and rifles. ATF AFMER reporting is segmented by Pistol, Revolver, Rifle, and Shotgun categories of manufacturing and export. Identify and remove firearm manufacturers that do not produce pistols and rifles that accept detachable magazines such as derringers, single shot pistols, and fixed magazine rifles. Master totals were created for the top 15 pistol manufacturers (~80 percent of pistols) and top 15 rifle manufacturers (~60 percent of rifles) produced in the 2021 ATF AFMER. Independent research and direct survey of firearm and magazine manufacturers yielded information on how many magazines, and their capacity, were provided with each firearm and made available to the U.S. consumer market from 1990 to 2021 through wholesalers, retailers, and sold directly to consumers. If historical information was not available, a value of one magazine per pistol and rifle was used for the list of top manufacturers. Organizing the data collected from top pistol and rifle manufacturers, industry averages of magazines and capacity were applied to all other pistol and rifle manufacturers reported by ATF AFMER for the study period (1990-2021). Consumer market totals were taken directly from participating magazine manufacturers with no adjustment. Totals of each segment were rounded to the closest thousand.

RESULTS

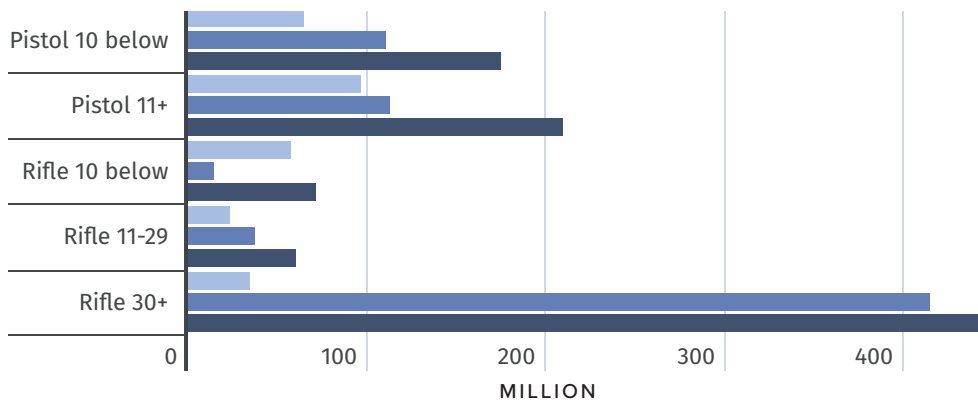
Independent research and direct survey of firearm and magazine manufacturers yielded industry averages for pistol and rifle magazines that come “in the box.” Pistol magazines had an industry average of 2.1 magazines per firearm from the manufacturer with 44 percent being 10 and below capacity. Rifle magazines had an industry average of 1.8 magazines per firearm from the manufacturer with half being 10 and below capacity, 20 percent being 11-29 round capacity, and 30 percent being 30+ round capacity.

Of the firearm magazines estimated in this study, 29 percent originate from detachable magazines provided “in the box” with each newly manufactured firearm and 71 percent of detachable magazines were distributed to the consumer market as an “aftermarket”



product. An estimated 963 million magazines were produced and entered the commercial market between 1990 and 2021. Of the estimated 963 million magazines, approximately 74 percent, or 717 million magazines, have a capacity of 11+ rounds. A majority of the 11+ round capacity magazines are rifle magazines. About 46 percent of the magazines estimated in this study are rifle magazines with 30+ round capacity. The percentage of detachable magazines at 11+ capacity is about 55 percent of total pistol magazines. The amount of 10 and below capacity rifle magazines supplied from the manufacturer is over one and a half times the amount of 30+ capacity rifle magazines. The consumer market totals of rifle magazines show 30+ capacity magazines, over 413 million, are over thirty times the amount available than 10 and below capacity rifle magazines, about 13 million.

Firearm Magazine Estimate 1990 – 2021					
	Pistol 10 below	Pistol 11+	Rifle 10 below	Rifle 11-29	Rifle 30+
Manufacturer Total	64,099,000	96,148,000	57,362,000	22,945,000	34,417,000
Consumer Market Total	110,694,000	112,997,000	13,717,000	37,441,000	413,952,000
Manufacturer and Consumer Totals	174,793,000	209,145,000	71,079,000	60,386,000	448,369,000
Grand Total: 963,772,000					



LIMITATIONS

Not all magazine manufacturers that support and supply firearm manufacturers and the consumer market responded to the survey/provided data; therefore, the results are a conservative estimate. Not all segments of detachable magazines could be counted due to lack of public information or availability of records. For example, detachable shotgun magazines are prevalent in certain shooting sports and tactical applications but were not counted. Military and law enforcement sales were not counted. This analysis did not account for breakage or magazines that were destroyed/discarded as no data exists. No reliable data exists prior to 1990 to estimate historic detachable magazines that may still be available for sale or in working condition. This is due to lack of ATF AFMER reporting prior to 1990. This study does not claim all the magazines estimated in this study are owned by Americans; these are both magazines estimated to be in circulation and made available for sale at some point from 1990 to 2021.

DISCUSSION

The popularity of small “conceal carry” pistols highly influenced the distribution of pistol magazines in most recent years, but following trends in manufacturing, many of these pistols are being updated with higher capacity magazines as designs are updated. Magazine-fed semiautomatic pistols and rifles are becoming increasingly popular. Based on magazines alone, 11+ round capacity, market share of these firearms in the United States should be expected hold pace with historic trends.^{1,2}

A recent study of the general population within the United States identified that over 1,300 firearm owners provided more insight to magazine ownership. Results suggest that more than a third (36.3 percent) of the U.S. population are currently firearm owners.³ Those identified as firearm owners were asked to share details about their detachable magazine ownership. More than half (53.2 percent) of firearm owners reported owning a detachable magazine for a handgun, and nearly a third (32.7 percent) reported owning a detachable magazine for a rifle. Nearly a third (35.9 percent) of firearm owners reported owning a detachable handgun magazine with a capacity of 11 or more rounds, while nearly a quarter (24.3 percent) of firearm owners reported owning a

detachable rifle magazine with a capacity of 11 or more rounds. Overall, 43.3 percent of firearm owners reported owning a detachable magazine with a capacity of 11 or more rounds. These findings indicate that approximately 8.9 percent of the U.S. population owns a magazine holding 11 or more rounds.⁴

According to a recent NSSF study, Modern Sporting Rifle (MSR) Comprehensive Consumer Report 2022, magazines were one of the most common accessories purchased among the 2,185 usable responses. “Over half (52%) of MSR owners stated the detachable magazine capacity of their MSR is 30 rounds. When asked why they chose their respective capacity, most frequent responses were related to popularity / standard and being readily available.”⁵ The latest estimate of MSRs produced between 1990–2021 is over 28 million⁶, making aftermarket magazines for these firearms abundant in the United States, where such capacity magazines are not banned⁷. These rifle magazines, like all categories of magazines in this study, are those that are provided “in the box” from the manufacturer and made available for sale. The proportion of owned magazines versus magazines available for sale is currently unattainable.

CONCLUSION

The findings in this report give some insight to the volume and capacity of detachable firearm magazines in the United States for the study period. A more comprehensive estimate would be attainable if participation from firearm and magazine manufacturers increased in future updates. Consumer preferences of 11+ capacity magazines are reflected in the manufacturing activity of the firearm industry. Changes in legislation outlawing or granting access to these magazines may change overall market proportions but the preference to have more ammunition available is clear.

¹ Association, N. R. (n.d.). 33 new concealed-carry guns for 2018. An Official Journal Of The NRA. <https://www.shootingillustrated.com/content/33-new-concealed-carry-guns-for-2018/>

² Association, N. R. (n.d.-a). 10 popular concealed carry guns. An Official Journal Of The NRA. <https://www.shootingillustrated.com/content/10-popular-concealed-carry-guns/>

³ NSSF 2022 Magazine Capacity Study.

⁴ Id.

⁵ NSSF Modern Sporting Rifle Comprehensive Consumer Report 2022.

⁶ (2024, January 11). NSSF releases most recent firearm production figures. NSSF. <https://www.nssf.org/articles/nssf-releases-most-recent-firearm-production-figures-2024/#:~:text=Data%20indicates%20that%2028%2C144%2C000%20Modern,24.4%20million%20to%20>

[28.1%20million.](#)

⁷ Cal. Penal Code § 16350, 16740, 16890, 32310-32450., Colo. Rev. Stat. §§ 18-12-301, 302, 303., Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 53-202w, 53-202q., Del. Code Ann. Tit. 11, § 1469(a), D.C. Code Ann. §§ 7-2506.01(b); 7-2507.06(a)(4), Haw. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 134-8(c), 720 ILCS 5/24-110 (enacted January 10, 2023 by 2021 IL HB 5471., Md. Code Ann., Crim. Law § 4-305., Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 140, §§ 121, 131M., N.J. Stat. Ann. §§ 2C:39-1(y), 2C:39-3(j), 2C:39-9(h), N.Y. Penal Law §§ 265.00(23), 265.02(8), 265.10, 265.11, 265.20(7-f), 265.36-265.37., See 2022 Oregon Ballot Measure 114, SEC. 11., R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 11-471-2, 11-471-3(a), Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 13, § 4021 (enacted by 2017 VT S 55, Sec. 8), RCW 9.41.370.