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U.S. firearms sales April 2022: drastic year-over-year drop

(GREENVILLE, SC, USA & HALIFAX, NS, CANADA) – Small Arms Analytics & Forecasting (SAAF) estimates April 2022 U.S. firearms unit sales at about 1.5 million units, a year-over-year decrease amounting to –20.7% relative to April 2021. The decline affected the handgun segment (–21.8%) somewhat more than it did the long-gun segment (–18.8%). Detailed data by firearms type and state are available for purchase at <https://SmallArmsAnalytics.com/shop/>.

SAAF’s firearms unit sales estimates are based on raw data taken from the FBI’s National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), adjusted for checks unlikely to be related to end-user firearms sales. For example, in April the state of Illinois conducted nearly 270,000 firearms permit checks alone whereas end-user unit sales likely amounted to about 39,000. SAAF thus makes certain adjustments to the FBI’s raw data based on retailer reports and other information. Even so, SAAF-adjusted NICS numbers may still underestimate the actual unit sales level by some amount.

SAAF Chief Economist Jurgen Brauer comments that “the April year-over-year drop in firearms unit sales fits the pattern thus far this year: drastic monthly drops relative to 2021 but still substantially above the pre-pandemic sales levels: in 2019, unit sales from January to April amounted to about 4.6 million whereas in 2022 they amounted to about 5.9 million for the same months.”

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ABOUT Small Arms Analytics & Forecasting

Small Arms Analytics & Forecasting (SAAF) is a research consultancy focusing on the business & economics of the global small arms and ammunition markets. Politically unaffiliated, SAAF is an independent, evidenced-based resource for industry, advocacy, research, and policymaking alike, as well as for financial analysts and members of the media. Among other services, SAAF produces forecasts of U.S. civilian firearms unit sales, nationwide and for most states. Small Arms AnalyticsSM and Small Arms Analytics & ForecastingSM are legally protected Service Marks of Small Arms Analytics & Forecasting. (Contact sales@SmallArmsAnalytics.com for sales and other information.)