



Ultra-Compact Handguns

“Ultra-compact” or “ultra-concealable” firearms are a class of semiautomatic handguns characterized by their small size and high caliber. Firearms manufacturers began to promote these handguns, sometimes known as “pocket rockets,” in response to a growing number of state statutes that permit licensed persons to carry concealed handguns.¹ The portability of ultra-compact handguns increases the risk of indiscriminate use by previously law-abiding citizens thrust into emotionally-charged situations.²

Ultra-compact handguns are typically no more than seven inches in overall length and are chambered for higher caliber ammunition (*i.e.*, 9mm or larger). Tracing data from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives indicates that ultra-compact handguns are increasingly traced to crime.³

There are no federal or state laws prohibiting the manufacture or sale of ultra-compact handguns.

Local Laws

A few local governments in California – Los Angeles, Oakland and San Francisco – ban the sale of ultra-compact handguns. These municipal bans define ultra-compact firearms as a handgun with a length of 6.75” or less, and a height of 4.5” or less.

(Last updated: September 21, 2009.)

¹ [Violence Policy Center, *Pocket Rockets: The Gun Industry’s Sale of Increased Killing Power* \(July 2000\).](#)

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*