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# Fred Meyer

What's on your list today?

## LOCAL NEWS



A photo taken by Portland Police shows how a handgun was hidden under the front seat of a 1997 Mercedes Benz that was stopped Sunday at North Vancouver Avenue and Buffalo Street for illegally tinted windows and failure to signal a turn. The vehicle had bullet proof armor and the driver and a passenger were known to the officers as gang associates.

### Gun Violence Explosion

#### Shootings alarm residents, police and gun control advocates

BY MINDY COOPER  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A deadly wave of recent gang violence, including multiple shootings from city streets and other public places, has alarmed residents, police and gun control advocates.

According to Sgt. Pete Simpson, information officer for the Portland Police Bureau, the city has had 60 gang-related shootings so far this year, up from 48 at the same time last year. Since July 4, there have been nine shootings reported to Portland police.

Although the carnage comes as no surprise to Simpson, who said Portland gang and youth violence has risen steadily since 2007, he said preventing guns from landing in the wrong hands is one of the many necessary prevention efforts in the battle over gangs.

"We need responsible gun ownership, which means locking guns

up, not leaving them in cars, and having serial numbers ready to report if it gets stolen," said Simpson. "And that is what the majority of gun owners do, but it is the people who are getting the guns illegally that are the problem."

Simpson said there are a variety of methods guns are attained illegally, from thefts to trading drugs for them.

Within Multnomah County, there is a police Gang Task Force, which was reinstated and reformed in 2011 to curb the rise in illegal weaponry. Last year, they seized 153 handguns and 102 rifles or shotguns.

The focus is to get guns out of the hands of criminals and juveniles who cannot legally possess them, Simpson said.

According to Penny Okamoto, executive director for the non-profit Cease Fire Oregon, the number of deaths by guns in the state has outpaced the number of people who die in car accidents.

Reducing gun violence is the goal of Ceasefire Oregon, which works with law enforcement to hold gun turn-ins for cash events.

"We reason, educate, legislate," said Okamoto, who added that the

number of guns within Oregon varies by county. "Some counties are 25 percent of households, and others are as high as 80 percent."

She said Oregon law encourages, but doesn't require, gun registration. There is a license needed to carry a concealed handgun, however, which applies if you are going to keep a firearm in your car, purse, or in places such as under your jacket, she said.

Although there are well over 130,000 people in Oregon who have concealed handgun licenses, she said there is no way to know how many regularly possess or carry a gun.

A legal and responsible way of going about getting a firearm is going to a federally licensed firearm dealer, Okamoto said, adding that most gun shops and gun shows, which sell more than 25 guns, are required to obtain the commercial license.

"People can go in there, and the dealer is actually going to perform a background check on who is buying a gun. They call the Oregon State Police to see if the person is a

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