



Executive Summary:

Risk Landscape Report: Machine Gun Conversion Devices

This report focuses on Machine Gun Conversion Devices (MCDs) which are aftermarket components that convert semi-automatic firearms into fully automatic weapons. By identifying marketing patterns, evasion tactics, and emerging legal developments, LegitScript equips payment service providers, online platforms, and other stakeholders to detect and mitigate risks associated with MCD sales.

Regulatory Landscape

Federal law defines a machine gun as any firearm or component capable of firing more than one round per trigger pull. New civilian machine gun production has been prohibited since 1986, with exceptions for certain licensed entities. While devices like auto sears and “switches” fall under this prohibition, some mechanisms, such as binary triggers, have historically skirted classification as machine guns, spurring regulatory disputes.

State legislatures have attempted to fill gaps through “rapid-fire device” laws, as seen in Colorado and Oregon, but enforcement faces legal headwinds, including recent federal court rulings striking down similar restrictions. The Supreme Court’s 2024 decision overturning the federal bump stock ban underscores these challenges.

Enforcement Challenges

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Key Findings

- **Rising Availability:** Federal data shows a steep increase in MCD seizures—over 5,400 devices from 2017–2021, representing a 570% increase from the previous five-year period.

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"The spread of at-home manufacturing and digital file sharing has dramatically increased access to these devices, prompting significant attention from US authorities."

Machine Gun Conversion Devices
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- **Marketing Evasion Tactics:** Sellers disguise devices as innocuous items (e.g., "portable wall hangers" or "keychains"), use code words like "giggle switch," and market digital blueprints for at-home printing.
- **Legal Complexity:** Federal law prohibits most post-1986 machine guns, but certain high-rate-of-fire devices—such as binary triggers and forced reset triggers—exist in a legal gray area, with ongoing state-level legislative efforts and court challenges shaping enforcement.
- **Cross-Border & Online Distribution:** Overseas sellers ship products using stealth packaging to evade customs. Sellers also leverage encrypted messaging apps like Telegram, Signal, and WhatsApp to arrange transactions beyond the visibility of public platforms.

Marketing Trends & Evasion Tactics

Illicit sellers promote MCDs across open web marketplaces, social media, and digital goods platforms. Strategies include:

- **Deceptive Branding:** Using everyday product descriptions to disguise MCDs.
- **Keyword Substitution:** Employing euphemisms and slang to evade detection.
- **3D Print File Sales:** Offering downloadable blueprints for manufacturing parts at home.
- **Platform Hopping:** Using social media posts to redirect customers to encrypted messaging apps for transactions.
- **Stealth Packaging:** Concealing devices within unrelated items to avoid customs inspection.

Conclusion

MCDs represent a growing online threat, combining ease of production, broad distribution channels, and a shifting legal framework. By monitoring keywords, marketing tactics, and platform migration patterns, LegitScript helps partners stay ahead of illicit sellers and implement effective risk mitigation strategies.

Next Steps

This executive summary is just a snapshot of our in-depth analysis on Machine Gun Conversion Devices. The full report contains **detailed case studies, expanded keyword lists, platform-specific findings, and actionable risk-mitigation strategies** for your business.

[Contact our sales team](#) to learn how you can access the complete report and protect your platform from illicit firearms component sales.

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