

Special Feature 4: Police Initiatives to Restrict Crossbows (pp. 43–46)

1. Crossbow-related Incidents and Consultations with the Police

(1) Murders

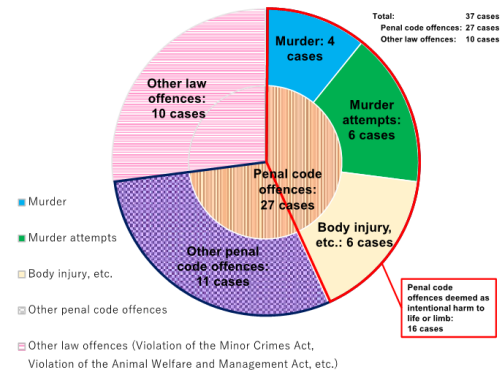
In June 2020, a 23-year-old man used a crossbow to kill and wound 4 people. After this incident, murder attempts using crossbows occurred one after another.

(2) Number of Processed Crossbow-related Cases

The number of cases in which crossbows were used from 2010 to 2020 was 27. Among these, 16 cases, over half of them, were deemed as intentional harm to life or limb, which includes 4 murder cases and 6 murder attempt cases.

(3) Consultation with the Police on the Usage of Crossbows

The number of cases reported to the police from 2010 to 2020 regarding crossbows was 172. The reports included concerns about crossbow owners, actual harm to private houses, as well as threats and other damage.

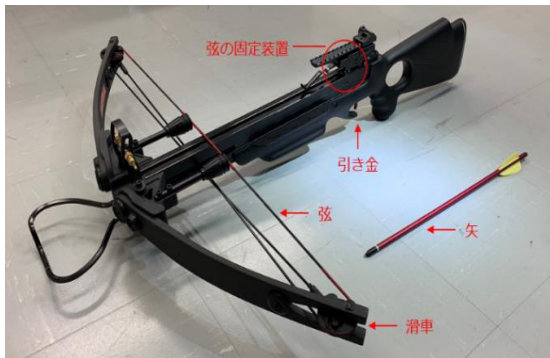


Number of cleared cases in which crossbows were used
(Total between 2010 and 2020)

2. Overview of Crossbows

(1) What are Crossbows

A crossbow has a device that fixes a string in a drawn position. A user attaches an arrow after fixing a string, and shoots it by pulling a trigger just like a gun. It is used for shooting competitions and other target shooting as a sport, and for tranquilizing wild animals.



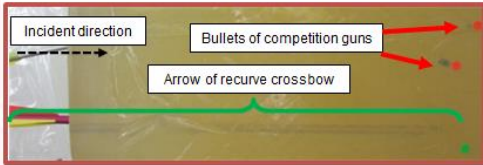
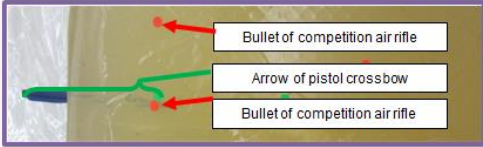
Example of a crossbow (compound crossbow)



Crossbow shooting competition

(2) Testing the Lethal Power of Crossbows

The National Research Institute of Police Science tested the lethality of crossbows and found that they have comparable lethal power to air guns and handguns, which are subject to regulations under the Act for Controlling the Possession of Firearms or Swords and Other Such Weapons.

Depth of penetration into gelatin and kinetic energy of bullet and arrow, etc. (compared to gun)		Kinetic energy, etc. of bullets and arrows shot			Depth of penetration (cm)
		Bullet speed/arrow speed (m/s)	J/cm ²	J	
<p>*J (joule): A unit of kinetic energy that shows the power of an object that is moving at a certain speed to move or deform another object when another object is hit by the moving object in figures.</p> 	Competition gun (22 caliber)	277.0	388.4	99.1	34.8
	Recurve crossbow (175 pounds)	63.3	102.1	63.1	34.1
 <p>* The thickest part of the bow was used as the cross-sectional area (cm²) for calculating J/cm² of the crossbow. * Shot from about 2 meters away. * 10% concentration of gelatin was used for measuring the depth of penetration.</p>	Competition air rifle	178.6	53.4	8.5	8.3
	Pistol crossbow (50 pounds)	49.2	23.0	6.5	8.2
Potential to kill a human (Power of 20 J/cm ² , which is the lower limit under the air gun regulations)					6.6

Test of penetration depth into gelatin

(3) Policies Concerning Crossbows Ownership

Taking in account the occurrence of crossbow incidents, the NPA established the Academic Experts Committee on Ownership of Crossbows, and the Committee submitted the Report on Ownership of Crossbows in December 2020. Based on the discussions and the report, a bill for the partial amendment to the Act for Controlling the Possession of Firearms or Swords and Other Such Weapons was passed during the 204th Diet in June 2021.

<p>1 Definition of a crossbow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A bow that fires an arrow by fixing and releasing a pulled string whose kinetic energy value of the arrow when measured as specified by the cabinet order is more than the value specified as having potential to kill a human under the cabinet order.
<p>2 Prohibiting possession and introducing a permit system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Crossbows will be subject to prohibition of possession. ➤ Persons who intend to possess crossbows for certain purposes (target shooting and tranquilizing wild animals, etc.) must obtain a permission from the prefectural public safety commission for each crossbow.
<p>3 Regulations on use and storage, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use: Target shooting is allowed only in places where necessary measures for preventing harm are taken. ➤ Storage: Obligation to store in an appropriate facility and by an appropriate method ➤ Transfer (sale, etc.): Obligation to confirm a permit for possession at the time of transfer Distributors must notify the prefectural public safety commission.
<p>4 Other matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Penalty for illegal possession, administrative disposition for violation of laws and regulations ➤ Persons who possess crossbows before the regulation comes into effect must apply for a permit or dispose of them within a certain period. or dispose.

Amendments to the Act for Controlling the Possession of Firearms or Swords and Other Such Weapons