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FAQs About Bump-Fires and Similar Devices

What Are Bump-Fire Devices?

Bump-fire devices are just one type of a variety of attachments sold in the United States to increase the rate of fire of semiautomatic firearms to mimic the firepower of a fully automatic machine gun. Semiautomatic firearms fire one round per trigger pull while fully automatic firearms (machine guns) fire more than one round with a single function of the trigger.

How Fast Can a Gun Equipped With One of These Devices Fire?

Although the increase in the rate of fire would depend on the type of device and the firearm used, these devices can significantly increase the rate of fire of semiautomatic firearms. The developer of the Slide Fire bump-fire device says his device would enable a shooter with an AK-47 to fire between 400 and 800 rounds per minute.

Why Are Bump-Fire Devices Legal?

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is in charge of reviewing such devices to determine whether they enable a firearm to actually function as a machine gun, which would make the device illegal. ATF has issued a series of opinions on the legality of bump-fire and similar devices. In 2010, ATF determined that a bump-fire device submitted for review did not make semiautomatic firearms function as fully automatic machine guns and that the devices were therefore legal. After ATF approves a device, it is not subject to federal firearms laws. ATF has found at least one device—the Auto Glove—to be a machine gun and hence banned for possession by civilians.

How Much Do These Devices Cost?

These devices range in price. Some trigger devices cost as little as \$39.95. Bump-fire devices are available for around \$100 to \$200 for a variety of rifles.

How Long Have These Devices Been in Circulation?

Trigger activators like the Hellfire device were popular in the 1990s. Bump-fire devices have risen in popularity in the last eight to 10 years.

Have These Devices Been Used in Other Mass Shootings?

Besides the use of bump-fire devices in the Las Vegas shooting that left nearly 60 dead and more than 500 injured, Hellfire trigger activator devices were attached to the TEC DC-9 assault pistols used to kill eight and wound six in a mass shooting at the Pettit and Martin law firm in San Francisco in 1993. And David Koresh, the leader of the Branch Davidian Cult in Waco, Texas, reportedly told law enforcement officials that he used Hellfire trigger activators on semiautomatic rifles.

Do These Devices Have a Legitimate Purpose?

Other than entertainment value, these devices have no purpose. As a July 22, 2011, article in *Shooting Times* promoting the Slide Fire put it, “All it does is enhance the shooter’s ability to trip the trigger faster—much faster. And as we all know, the faster the funner.”