

approach should apply to firearms. In fact, the emotional stress and adrenaline rush associated with using a gun, especially in lawful self-defense, makes any potential defect in design or manufacture doubly hazardous.

Unfortunately, the gun industry continues to avoid federal health and safety regulation and often blames the consumer for accidents and product malfunction. While there are many safety innovations for firearms, in the absence of a federal regulatory agency with the power to mandate their inclusion they have been incorporated episodically, if at all.

Firearms and automobiles really are like two peas in a pod. There is no more reason to allow firearm manufacturers to make guns that fire unexpectedly, killing and injuring bystanders and users, than there is to allow automobile manufacturers to sell cars that suddenly burst into flames or have faulty braking systems. But what separates these two peas in a pod is that, unlike cars, there is no federal agency that has health and safety authority over gun makers. The firearms industry is left to self-regulate and decide what, if any, safety mechanisms to include with its products. The result, as revealed in the next section, can be deadly for the consumer.

Section Three: The Most Common Offenders

The following firearm models have been dubbed "the most common offenders" because of the high number of complaints associated with them. These manufacturers are aware of the safety issues associated with these guns.

Glock Pistols

Glock pistols have been involved in more than 45 lawsuits¹⁹ relating to unintentional shootings, even though they have been on the market only since the late 1980's. Many of the Glock pistol incidents involve law enforcement. Police officers have had Glock pistols inadvertently discharge in a variety of situations including while holding unresisting suspects at gunpoint. For example, a driver stopped during a sex sting operation was unintentionally shot and wounded by a Tampa police officer in April 2002. The officer used his Glock service pistol to knock on the driver's window. According to Tampa police authorities, the gun went off unintentionally.²⁰

Additionally, because of their short, light trigger pull, Glock pistols have allegedly been involved in numerous household shootings involving young children. For example, in January 2004 a Nashville, Tennessee police officer was unintentionally shot to death by his 3-year-old son. The boy grabbed his father's .40-caliber Glock service weapon from

¹⁹ Review of the Firearms Litigation Clearinghouse, December 13, 2004.

²⁰ *St. Petersburg Times*, April 25, 2002.