

Inspections of Firearms Sellers Under the White House's 2021 Zero Tolerance Policy

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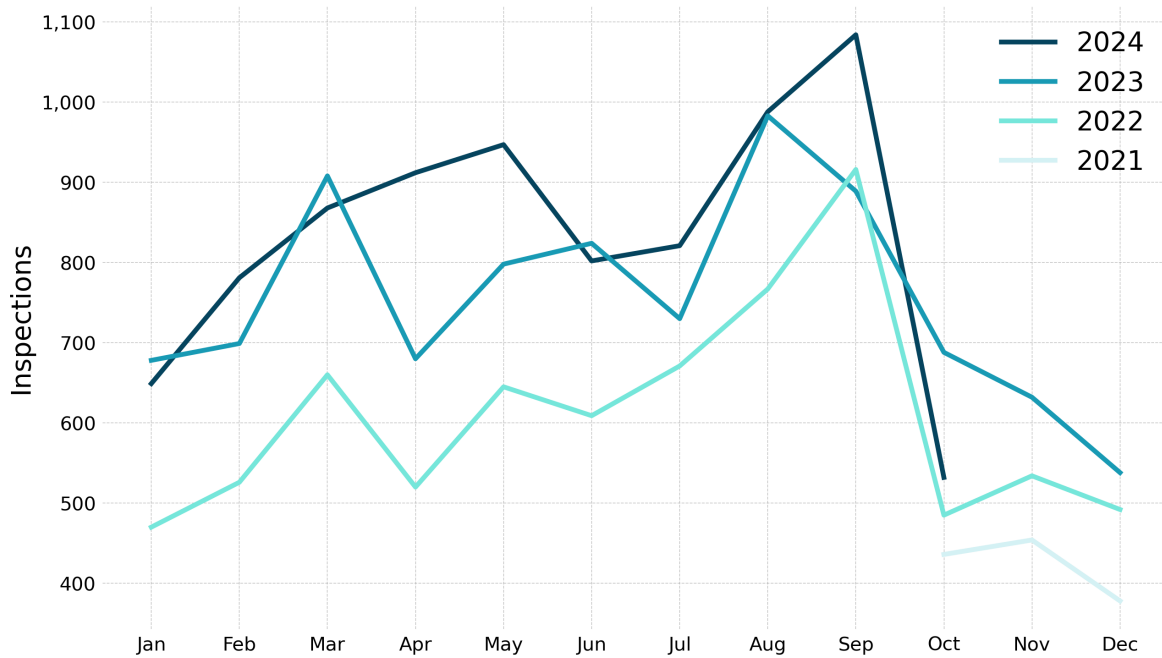
The Biden Administration announced in [June 2021](#) that it would ramp up inspections of licensed firearms-sellers as part of a wider gun control and public safety strategy. The White House touted the increased inspections, explaining that it wanted to “crack down on rogue gun dealers” and had “zero tolerance” for them.

Here, I briefly explore limited publicly available inspection data. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, which conducts the inspections, launched these data on its website soon after the White House's announcement.

The Number of Inspections Grew from 2022 to 2024

The number of ATF inspections grew each year. Figure 1 shows this increase, accounting for seasonal patterns. The ATF inspected firearms sellers (known as Federal Firearms Licensees) the most during late summers.

Figure 1.



The Number of Inspections Varied by Field Office

Dallas, Kansas City and Columbus—cities in the south and midwest—had the most inspections over the full period of data (Figures 2 and 3). Field offices in the west and northeast tended to have fewer inspections. These differences are likely because ATF field offices receive more funding when they have more licensees in their area. ATF has likely set up more offices where they have more licensees.

Figure 2.

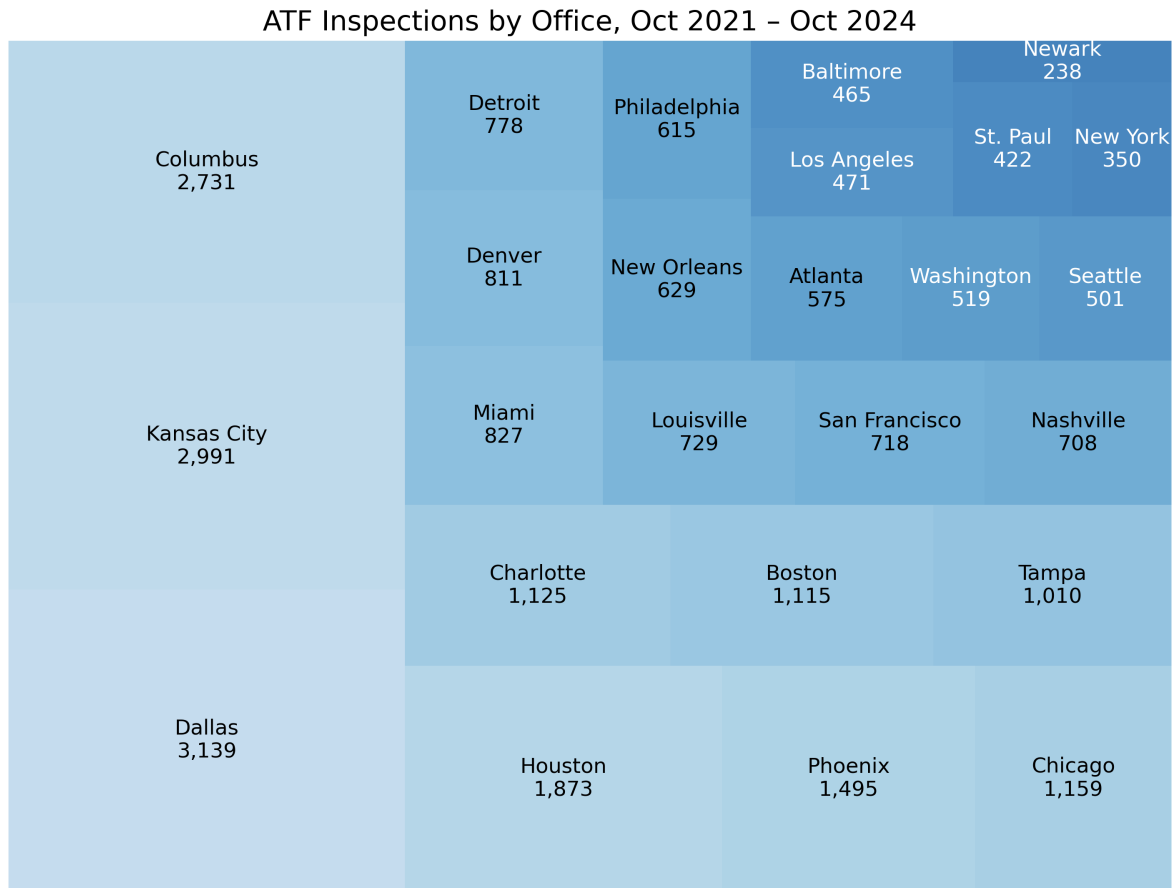
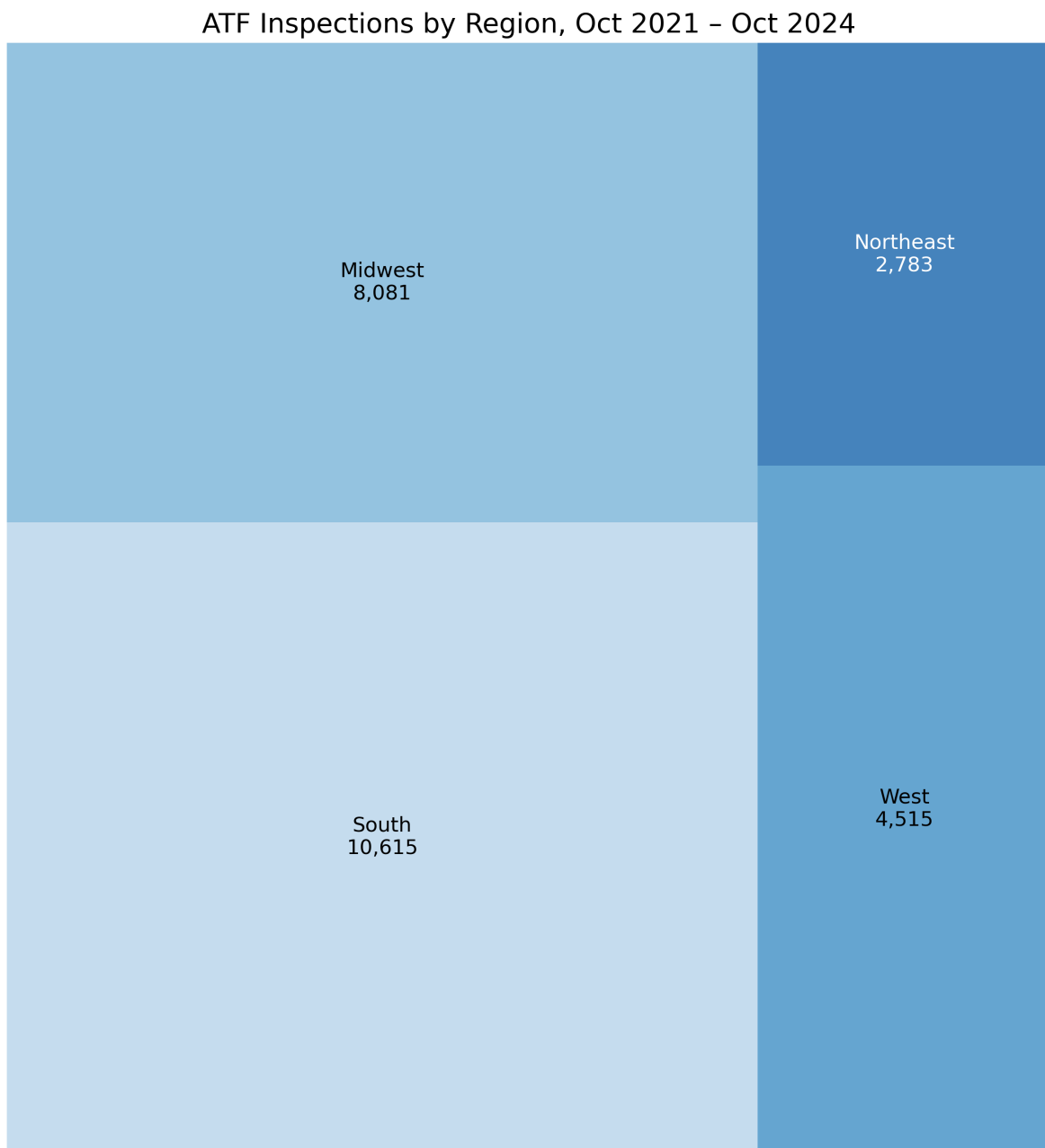
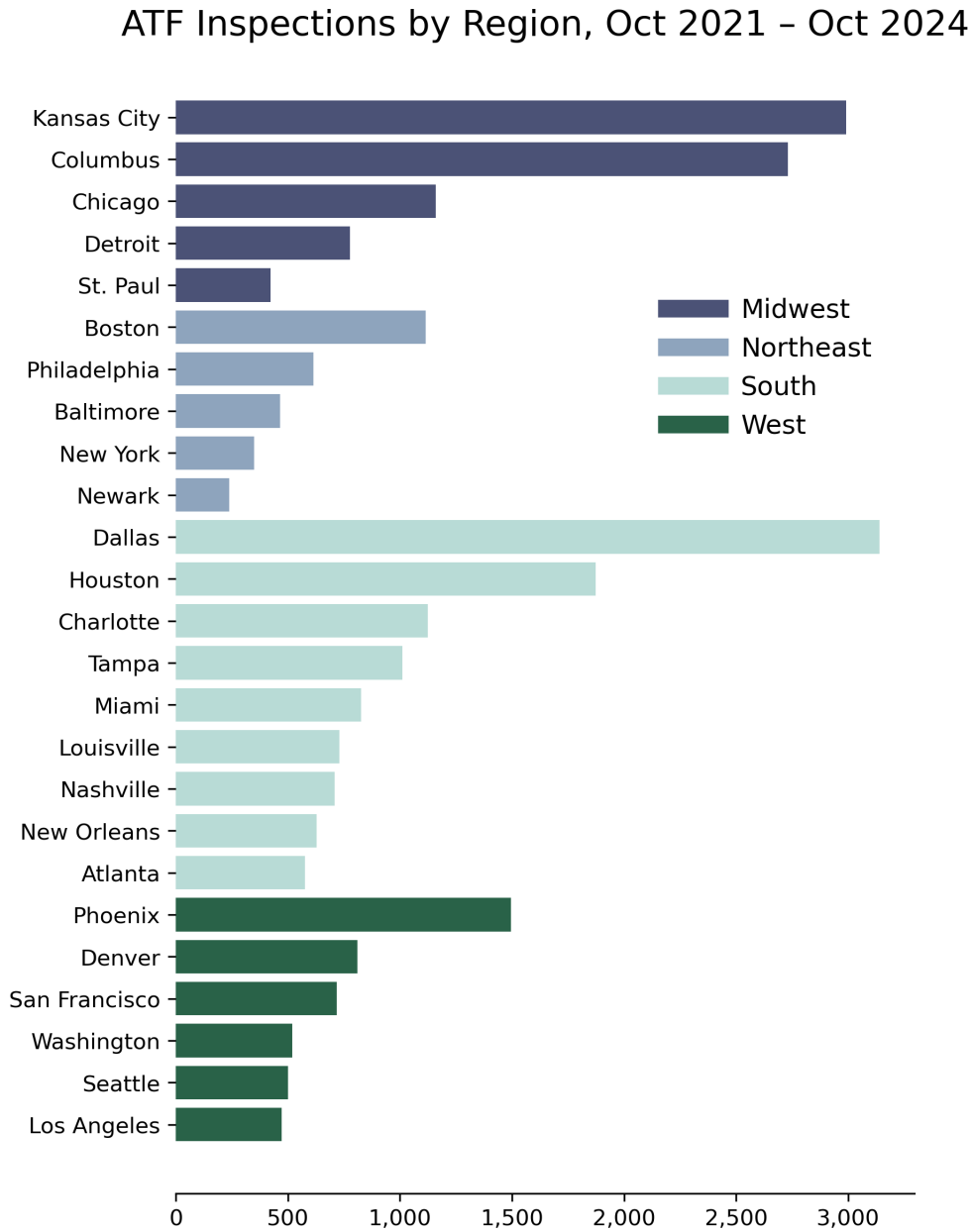


Figure 3.



Looking at offices by region in Figure 4 shows more offices in the south than the other regions.

Figure 4.



Inspection Results Also Varied by Field Office

Field offices that issued the most warnings and revoked the most licenses (Figures 5 and 6) were similar to those that had the most inspections (Figure 2). These similarities suggest that so-called rogue gun dealers are not concentrated in or attracted to any particular area.

Figure 5.

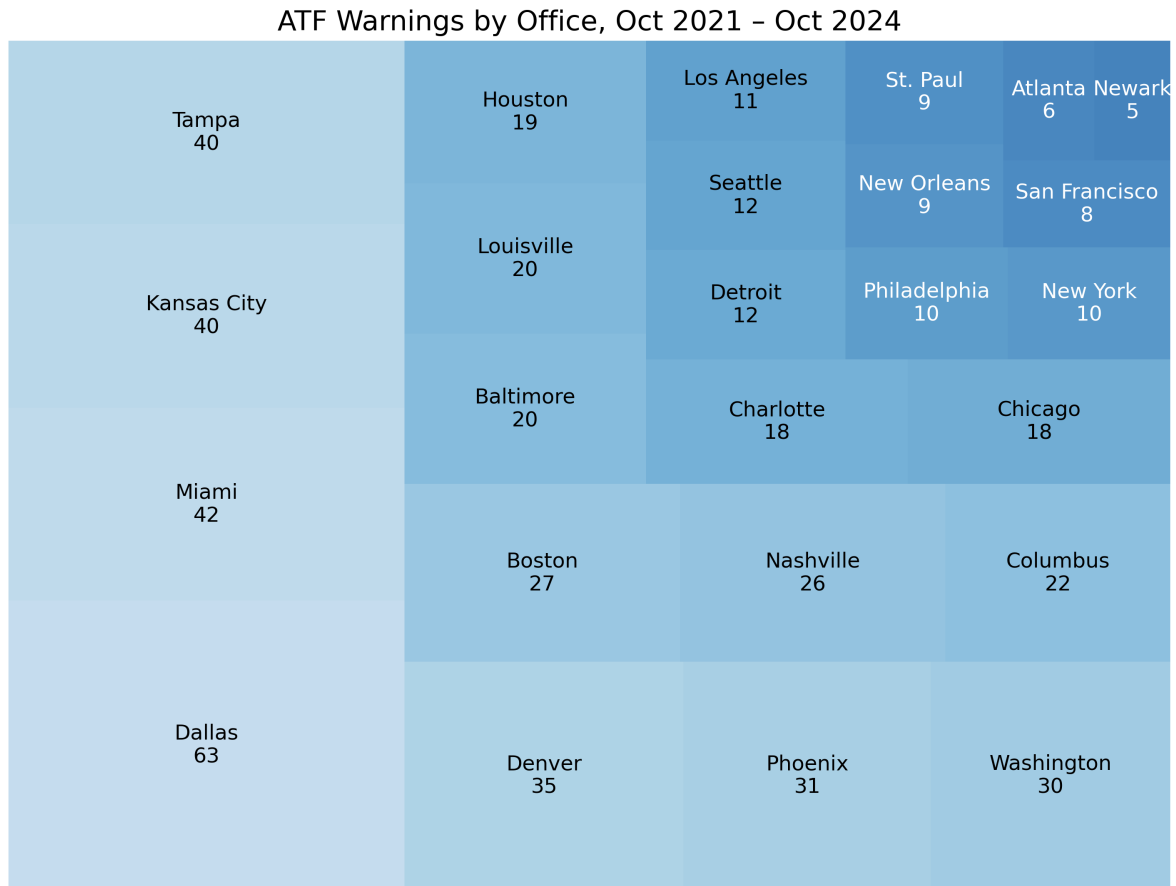


Figure 6.

ATF Revoked Licenses by Office, Oct 2021 – Oct 2024

