



COMMISSIONER OF FIREARMS

2017 REPORT

THE RCMP CANADIAN FIREARMS PROGRAM
CANADA'S AUTHORITY ON FIREARMS



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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF FIREARMS



It is my privilege to present the 2017 edition of the Commissioner of Firearms Report. This year's report highlights the contributions and achievements of the Canadian Firearms Program (CFP).

As a national Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) program, the CFP administers the *Firearms Act* and regulations, delivers specialized support services to law enforcement, and promotes firearms safety. We have made great strides to further expand the CFP's Program Expertise group and will continue to build on these successes to better serve its more than two million individual and business clients. In 2017, we saw an increase in contribution agreements under the *Aboriginal and/or Other Communities and Organizations (not-for-profit) Funding Program (AOCO)*. These initiatives highlight the value and importance of safe firearms practices for individuals pursuing traditional lifestyles and enhances public safety within these communities, while improving the safety of police officers working in these remote areas.

In alignment with the strategic objectives of the RCMP and the Government of Canada's commitment to reduce gun and gang violence, the Program will continue to work closely with domestic and international partners to combat firearms trafficking, reduce criminal activity, and strengthen national security.

I am pleased and honoured to assume the role of Commissioner of Firearms and take pride in the accomplishments of all of our employees at the CFP. I look forward to taking advantage of opportunities to continuously support the RCMP's commitment to safe communities for all Canadians.

Commissioner Brenda Lucki
Commissioner of Firearms
Royal Canadian Mounted Police

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The 2017 Commissioner of Firearms Report summarizes the CFP's operational activities and support to its more than two million clients. As required by the *Firearms Act*, the report is submitted annually to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness for tabling in Parliament.

CANADIAN FIREARMS PROGRAM

Mission and Values

The CFP's mission is to enhance public safety by reducing the risk of harm from misuse of firearms. It screens individual owners to confirm their eligibility to possess firearms, and promotes responsible ownership, storage and use of firearms. The CFP also provides Canadian and international law enforcement agencies with specialized services vital to the prevention and investigation of firearms crime and misuse.

In pursuit of its mission, the CFP:

- supports the lawful ownership and use of firearms in Canada by regulating firearms licensing and registration, and serves firearms clients with quality service, fair treatment and protection of confidential information;
- recognizes that the involvement of firearms owners and users, firearms businesses, law enforcement agencies, the provinces, the territories, federal agencies, Indigenous communities, safety instructors and firearms verifiers is essential for effective program delivery;
- commits to ongoing improvement and innovation to achieve the highest levels of service;
- engages its clients and stakeholders in reviewing and developing policies, and in communicating critical information on Program requirements and results;
- manages its resources efficiently to provide good value for money;
- provides clear and accurate reporting of Program performance and resource management; and,
- upholds the values and ethical standards of the Public Service of Canada by committing to fair staffing, supporting employee development, and fostering a work environment that encourages employee involvement and initiative.

Partners

Through the offices of Chief Firearms Officers (CFOs), the CFP works with provinces, territories and municipalities to manage firearms licensing, authorizations to carry or transport, and the continuous eligibility of licensees. The Program works with other federal departments and agencies, including:

- *Public Safety Canada (PS)*: The CFP provides accurate and up-to-date firearms-related policy advice and technical information, which contributes to advice and recommendations to the Minister and other senior government officials.
- *Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)*: Assesses and confirms firearms declarations being imported, and inspects firearms shipments to confirm admissibility.
- *Global Affairs Canada (GAC)*: Ensures Canada's international commitments regarding firearms reflect the government's priorities and issues the permits required to export and import firearms.
- *Department of Justice (DOJ)*: Consults the CFP on policy development on criminal law related to firearms.
- *Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada*: The CFP advises on firearms legislation and related issues.
- *Guns and Gangs law enforcement units*: The CFP collaborates on investigations leading to successful prosecution of criminals involved in the smuggling, trafficking and criminal use of firearms with provincial/territorial and municipal law enforcement units.
- *International partners*: Prevents the illegal movement of firearms across borders; maintains strong relationships with law enforcement agencies from the United States and Interpol and provides for electronic exchange of firearms trace information with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

History

In 1996, under the Department of Justice, the Canada Firearms Centre was established as a stand-alone agency to oversee the *Firearms Act*. In 2003, it became an independent agency under the Department of the Solicitor General and a Commissioner of Firearms was appointed. In 2006, the responsibility for the administration of the *Firearms Act* and the operation of the Canada Firearms Centre was transferred to the RCMP. In 2008, the RCMP amalgamated the Canada Firearms Centre and the Firearms Support Services Directorate into one integrated group – the Canadian Firearms Program (CFP).

Since 2006, the CFP has supported the lawful ownership and use of firearms in Canada by administering the *Firearms Act* and assisting law enforcement with firearms related investigations and expertise. The CFP reports to the Commissioner of Firearms, who is also the Commissioner of the RCMP.

Administration of the *Firearms Act*

The CFP administers the *Firearms Act* and is responsible for the licensing of individuals and businesses through provincial Chief Firearms Officers (CFO), the registration of restricted and prohibited firearms through the Registrar of Firearms (Registrar), and the Canadian Firearms Registry (CFR).

The CFP's national firearms safety education and awareness programs are key components of the safe use of firearms. Working with partner organizations, instructors, and provincial/territorial governments, the CFP disseminates information and training to firearm owners and the general public.

NOTEWORTHY IN 2017

Funding Agreements with Indigenous Communities

Hunting continues to be a necessary means to sustain life in northern and remote communities. However, many hunters (including minors) are unlicensed or improperly documented, and may lack awareness of firearms safety and the *Firearms Act*. The CFP recognizes the unique circumstances of many Indigenous peoples and communities in Canada whose geographic locations, together with language differences, pose challenges to individuals who are trying to meet the safety training and licensing requirements of the *Firearms Act*.

Supported by contribution agreements under the *Aboriginal and/or Other Communities and Organizations (not-for-profit) Funding Program (AOCO)*, project partnerships were established with Indigenous communities, tribal councils, hunter and trapper associations, and other community organizations to train and certify local firearms safety instructors and examiners. The instructors deliver the Canadian Firearms Safety Course (CFSC), as well as provide firearms licence application assistance and firearms safety education and services.

In 2017, 85 Indigenous communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, Ontario, and the Northwest Territories participated in the initiative, resulting in 30 firearms safety instructors/examiners being trained and certified, and 183 Canadian Firearms Safety Courses being delivered to 1,887 individuals who passed the course and were certified. In addition, projects reached out to over 5,000 community members to provide firearms safety education, assist with firearms licence applications and renewals, and deliver other firearms services. Many communities also benefited from the projects by enhancing their administrative capacity to enable their community to continue to deliver firearms services and provide a measure of local ownership over public safety.

The impacts of these projects are not fully captured by the statistics alone. The value of this training was recognized by experienced hunters and trappers, including elders, whose endorsement of, and participation in the projects highlight the importance of safe firearms practices for individuals pursuing traditional lifestyles.

Promoting firearms licences and safety training will also improve awareness around safe storage, handling, and the transportation of firearms, resulting in enhanced public safety within the communities and improved safety of police officers working in these remote areas.

Agreements to Improve Firearms Safety Awareness in Indigenous Communities				
	Number of Participating Communities	Number of Instructors Trained	Number of Courses Delivered	Number of Participants
2016	52	26	60	1,000
2017	85	30	183	1,887

Six-Month Licence Extension Period

As a result of the amendments made under the *Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act*, the Government of Canada implemented an automatic six-month extension period to extend the validity of firearms licences that expire on, or after, November 30, 2017, that are not renewed before their five-year expiry date. The Government believes in firearms measures that prioritize public safety while ensuring fair treatment for firearms owners.

Under the *Firearms Act*, individuals must hold a valid firearms licence to lawfully possess or acquire firearms and to acquire ammunition. The only exception is that a licence is not necessary if an individual were to borrow a firearm if the borrower remains under the direct and immediate supervision of a properly licensed adult aged 18 or older. Firearms licences are valid for five years and specify the privileges associated with acquiring and possessing a specific class of firearm. The automatic six-month extension will permit licence holders who do not renew their licence before the expiry date listed on the front of the licence (for example, due to an extended holiday, military service or hospitalization) with additional time to come into compliance with the licensing requirements of the *Firearms Act*, without the risk of criminal prosecution.

During the extension period, a firearm owner will not be allowed to use his or her firearm or acquire firearms or ammunition until the licence is renewed. Additionally, in the case of restricted or prohibited firearms, the extension period will not result in the extension of any authorizations to carry or transport, and new authorizations can only be issued for limited purposes. A firearm owner who does not renew his/her licence and remains in possession of a firearm after the six-month extension period may face sanctions under the *Criminal Code* and may lose existing privileges associated with their licence (e.g. grandfathering).

Deferral of the *Firearms Marking Regulations*

The *Firearms Marking Regulations*, under the *Firearms Act*, that were scheduled to come into force on June 1, 2017, were deferred to December 1, 2018. The deferral was intended to provide the time required to develop amendments to the Regulations in order to better facilitate the tracing of crime guns by law enforcement agencies.

KEEPING CANADA SAFE

Licensing

In Canada, an individual must possess a valid firearms licence to be authorized to use or own a firearm, as well as to acquire ammunition. The licence requirement does not apply in the case where an individual is using a firearm under the direct and immediate supervision of a valid firearms licence holder.

Under the existing system, individuals must apply to the Chief Firearms Officer (CFO) in their province or territory of residence in order to be issued a licence. All applicants are screened to ensure that there are no reasons why, in the interest of public safety, they should not possess a firearm.

There are two types of firearms licences available to individuals in Canada:

1. The Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) is the only licence available to new applicants aged 18 and older.
2. The Minor's Licence allows individuals between the ages of 12 and 17 to use, but not acquire, a firearm.

Section 5 of the *Firearms Act* provides CFOs with non-exhaustive criteria to be considered in determining eligibility to obtain a new licence, renewing an expiring licence, or in determining a person's continuous eligibility to hold a licence. This criteria includes: whether the person has been treated for a mental illness associated with violence, has a history of violent behaviour, or has been convicted of certain *Criminal Code* offences.

In 2017, there were approximately 2,109,531 licenced individuals across Canada, which includes both PAL holders and Minor's licences (Table 1).

Table 1: Individual firearms licences, by type and province or territory*			
Province or Territory	PAL	Minor's Licence	Total
Alberta	299,683	2,021	301,704
British Columbia	287,867	927	288,794
Manitoba	87,203	588	87,791
New Brunswick	68,110	187	68,297
Newfoundland and Labrador	74,587	343	74,930
Northwest Territories	5,644	31	5,675
Nova Scotia	73,302	944	74,246
Nunavut	3,743	6	3,749
Ontario	590,304	3,915	594,219
Prince Edward Island	6,151	14	6,165
Quebec	490,729	56	490,785
Saskatchewan	105,589	235	105,824
Yukon	7,299	53	7,352
Total Provinces	2,100,211	9,320	2,109,531

*Data captured as of December 31, 2017.

In 2017 alone, the CFP issued 401,884 individual licences, including new licences and renewals (Table 2).

Table 2: Number of individual licences issued (including new and renewals), 2017	
Licence type	Licence count
Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL)	397,755
Minor's Licence	4,129
Total	401,884

Firearms businesses

A business, museum or organization that manufactures, sells, possesses, handles, displays or stores firearms or ammunition must have a firearms business licence. Employees who handle firearms for these businesses must also have firearms licences, and be listed as an employee on the business licence. All restricted and prohibited firearms in a business inventory must be registered. CFOs perform periodic business inspections to confirm safe and lawful business practices and proper firearms storage. The CFP offers businesses the option of performing firearms registrations and transfers through the Program's Business Web Services online portal. As of December 31, 2017, there were 4,478 firearms businesses in Canada licensed under the *Firearms Act*, not including carriers and museums. Of these, 2,022 were licensed to only sell ammunition (Table 3).

Licence Purpose	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Business Licence	4,619	4,641	4,522	4,495	4,478
Ammunition Only	2,384	2,345	2,117	2,026	2,022

Shooting clubs and ranges

CFOs approve and perform inspections of shooting clubs and ranges within their jurisdictions to ensure safe operation and compliance with the *Firearms Act*. Standards set out in the *Firearms Act* and the *Shooting Clubs and Shooting Ranges Regulations* are intended to ensure the safety of members, visitors and the general public. The Program develops and implements range safety measures and reviews range safety inspection reports to improve guidelines, procedures and tools used by Firearms Officers for shooting range inspections. It also reviews range applications, conducts quality control checks, provides feedback on inspection reports and requests or conducts follow-up inspections as required. There were an estimated 1,400 shooting ranges in Canada in 2017.

Firearms licence application refusals

Under the *Firearms Act*, CFOs are authorized to refuse an application for a firearms licence based on their assessment of an individual’s potential risk to public safety. In 2017, there were 817 firearms licence applications refused for various public safety reasons (Tables 4 and 5). An individual may challenge any licence application refusal by a CFO by applying to a provincial court for a reference hearing.

As part of the CFP mandate to promote public safety, significant effort is made during the screening process to ensure that only those who are eligible to obtain a firearms licence are issued a licence. Firearms licence applicants are screened to identify potential public safety risks based on information provided in their firearms licence application. This includes providing proof of identity, personal history and background information, contact information for the applicant’s current and previous conjugal partners and references.

After a firearms licence is issued, continuous eligibility screening is conducted over the term of the licence. Events that are brought to the attention of a CFO may bring an individual’s eligibility to hold a licence into question. That individual might then be subject to review and further investigation (Table 5).

Year	Refusals
2013	886
2014	805
2015	688
2016	771
2017	817
Total	3,967

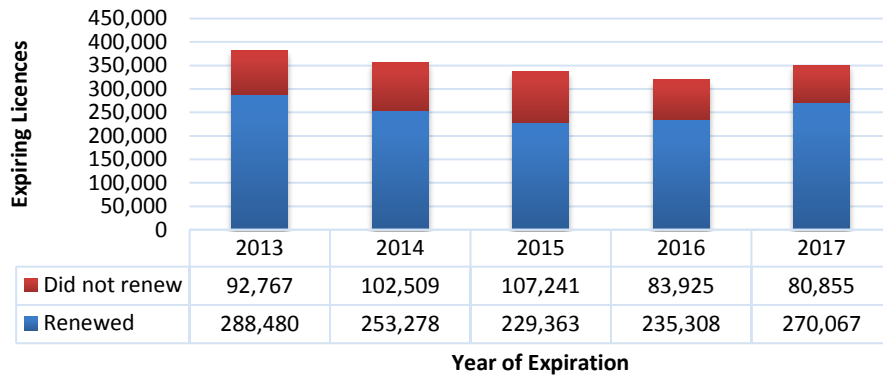
Reason	Refusals
Court-ordered prohibition/probation	240
Domestic violence	68
Drug offences	14
Mental health	149
PAL ineligible	15
Potential risk to others	199
Potential risk to self	148
Provided false information	192
Unsafe firearm use and storage	12
Violent behaviour	62
*Because a firearms licence application can be influenced by more than one factor, the sum of refusal reasons will exceed the annual total of firearms licence applications refused.	

Firearms licence renewals

Under the *Firearms Act*, firearms licence holders are responsible for renewing their licences prior to expiry. The CFP facilitates this process by sending renewal notices to licensees approximately 90 days prior to the expiry of the current licence. As a condition of their licence, licensees are legally required to advise the CFP of any address changes, which helps ensure they receive the renewal notice. A total of 350,922 individual PAL licences expired in 2017 (Chart 1). Moreover, there were 46,835 expired licences with a restricted or prohibited firearm registered to them at the time of expiration. Of those, 42,592 licence holders renewed; however, 4,243 licence holders did not renew (Chart 2). Of the licences that were renewed in 2017, 50% of firearms licence holders used the CFP’s online licence renewal tool through the Program’s web portal.

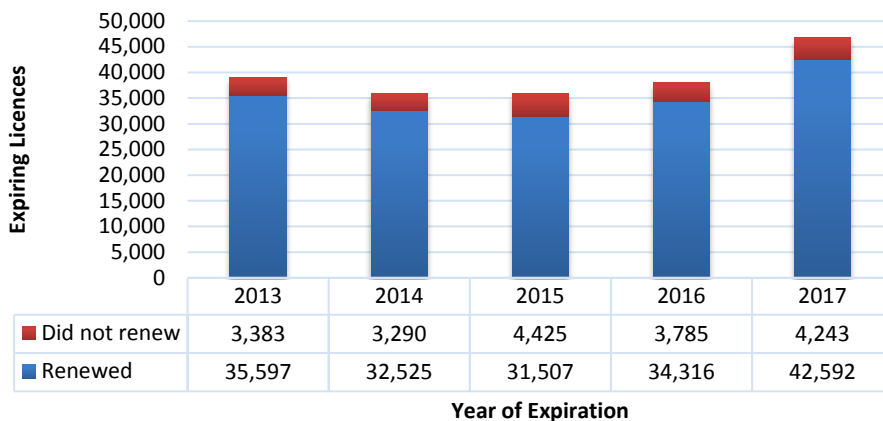
In 2017, the Governor in Council brought into force the amendment to the *Firearms Act* which provides firearms owners an automatic six-month extension period for a firearms licence that has not been renewed before the expiry date. For more information on the six-month licence extension period, see page 8.

Chart 1: Firearms licence renewals*, 2013 to 2017



*Note that in the 2016 Commissioner of Firearms Report, an error occurred in the electronic compilation of the data for "Firearms licence renewals, 2016". Corrected figures for that period are included here.

Chart 2: Licence renewal for Restricted and Prohibited privileges only and in possession of a firearm*, 2013 to 2017



*When a licence has expired, a registration revocation notice is sent to the licence holder 30 days after the licence expiry date. If there is no change in the licence holder's file within 90 days after the revocation, a report is sent to the police of jurisdiction for follow-up. A lack of renewal could be associated with a licence holder having disposed of his/her firearm(s), moved outside Canada or passed away.

*Note that in the 2016 Commissioner of Firearms Report, an error occurred in the electronic compilation of the data for "Compliance levels for restricted and prohibited firearms only, 2016". Corrected figures for that period are included here.

Continuous eligibility screening of firearms licence holders

Under the continuous eligibility regime, at any point during an individual's licence validity period, an event could occur that could prompt a review of their eligibility to hold a firearms licence. The Canadian Firearms Information System (CFIS) contains current and historical firearms licence holder data.

If a firearm licence holder is involved in an event which could affect their eligibility (as defined by section 5 of the *Firearms Act*), it is reported by law enforcement via the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) database and sent to the relevant CFO for review. An event can also be registered by individuals using the CFP's 1-800 number. A CFO is authorized to investigate the incident to determine if the client remains eligible to hold a licence.

Firearms licence revocations

Under the *Firearms Act*, CFOs are authorized to revoke a firearms licence based on their assessment of the licence holder's risk to public safety. There were 2,663 firearms licences revoked in 2017 (Tables 6 and 7). Similar to licence application refusals, an individual may challenge a licence revocation by applying to a provincial court for a reference hearing. As a result, some of these revocations may have been referred to, or overturned by the courts since the initial revocation.

Table 6: Number of firearms licence revocations, 2013 to 2017	
Year	Revocations
2013	2,497
2014	2,354
2015	2,347
2016	2,223
2017	2,663
Total	12,084

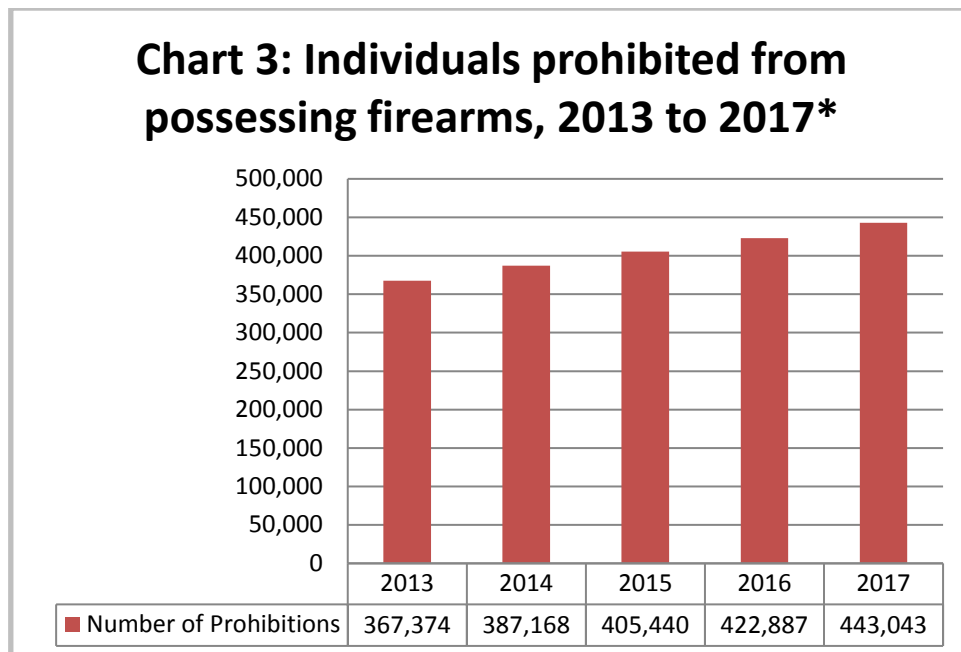
Table 7: Reasons for firearms licence revocations, 2017*	
Reason	Revocations
Court-ordered prohibition/probation	1,546
Domestic violence	125
Drug offences	22
Mental health	417
PAL ineligible	3
Potential risk to others	361
Potential risk to self	373
Provided false information	154
Unsafe firearm use and storage	56
Violent behaviour	95
*Because a firearms licence application can be influenced by more than one factor, the sum of revocation reasons will exceed the annual total of firearms licence applications revoked.	

Firearms licence application refusals and firearms licence revocations are recorded in the CFP's national CFIS database. Therefore, individuals who have an application refused or a licence revoked, should not attempt to evade this decision by moving from one municipal or provincial/territorial jurisdiction to another.

Firearm prohibition orders for individuals

Under section 89 of the *Firearms Act*, every court, judge or justice that orders, varies or revokes a firearms prohibition order must notify the CFO in their jurisdiction. Firearms licence applicant screening includes checking if an applicant is subject to a prohibition order. A prohibition order prevents an individual from legally possessing a firearm for a specified period of time and results in the refusal of a firearms licence application. However, under section 113 of the *Criminal Code*, special provisions may be made for an individual, against whom a prohibition order is made, to possess a firearm if they are able to establish to the satisfaction of a competent authority that they require a firearm for the purpose of hunting in order to sustain themselves or their family.

Prohibition orders are recorded in the CPIC database and form part of the background and continuous eligibility checks for firearms licencees. Information from municipal, provincial and federal court records also contribute to the assessment of an individual's application. A match against a court order may result in the CFO conducting an investigation that could lead to a revocation or a change in licence conditions. In 2017, there were 443,043 individuals prohibited from possessing firearms (Chart 3).



Note: Data generated from CPIC system – Data not managed by RCMP.

*Prohibition orders are for a specified period of time and can carry over from year to year. The totals reflect ongoing prohibition orders and not only those that are newly issued.

Registration

All firearms can be categorized into one of three classes, defined in subsection 84(1) of the *Criminal Code*:

- Non-restricted firearms - typically shotguns and rifles;
- Restricted firearms - predominantly handguns; and,
- Prohibited firearms - mostly certain handguns and fully automatic firearms.

All restricted and prohibited firearms in Canada must be registered; however, before a firearm can be registered for the first time, it must be verified. Verification is the process used to confirm the identification and class of a firearm by an approved verifier. The Program, through the Registrar of Firearms, coordinates with the National Verifiers Network. The National Verifiers Network authorizes verifiers and responds to all inquiries about becoming a certified verifier.

Applicants who wish to register a firearm must already have a firearms licence allowing them to possess the corresponding class of firearm. In other words, a firearms licence with the appropriate privileges is required to register a restricted or prohibited firearm. When a registered firearm is transferred to a new owner, the Registrar of Firearms will issue a new registration certificate if the new owner is eligible to possess that type of firearm.

The registration certificate number links a firearm to its licensed owner in the CFIS database. As with firearms licences, a subset of this information can then be accessed by law enforcement agencies via CPIC.

As of December 31, 2017, there were 1,090,430 restricted or prohibited firearms registered to individuals or businesses in Canada (Tables 8 and 9).

Firearm Class	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Restricted	659,387	726,705	795,854	839,295	907,362
Prohibited	188,552	185,793	182,493	183,333	183,068
Total	847,939	912,498	978,347	1,022,628	1,090,430

*Data captured as of December 31st of each year

Province or territory	Restricted	Prohibited	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	7,876	1,481	9,357
Prince Edward Island	2,453	736	3,189
Nova Scotia	23,796	6,233	30,029
New Brunswick	17,850	4,373	22,223
Quebec	87,019	27,312	114,331
Ontario	328,573	74,956	403,529
Manitoba	32,429	5,388	37,817
Saskatchewan	48,797	7,941	56,738
Alberta	182,856	25,120	207,976
British Columbia	170,056	28,702	198,758
Yukon	2,801	372	3,173
Northwest Territories	1,624	295	1,919
Nunavut	382	32	414
Other	850	127	977
Total	907,362	183,068	1,090,430

Firearms registration application refusals and certificate revocations

The Registrar of Firearms has the authority to revoke registration certificates and refuse firearms registration applications. In 2017, there were 46 firearm registration applications refused and 8,720 firearm registration certificates revoked (Table 10).

Year	Applications refused	Certificates revoked	Total
2013	134	70,027	70,161
2014	105	58,609	58,714
2015	60	7,159	7,219
2016	59	6,825	6,884
2017	46	8,720	8,766
Total	404	151,340	151,744

Note: For 2013-2014, totals include non-restricted firearms for Quebec, but not for other provinces. Prior to 2014, registration refusals were calculated by application date. In 2014, they were calculated by refusal date. The significant decrease in 2015 is attributed to the deletion of non-restricted registrations in Quebec.

Safety Training

As outlined in the *Firearms Act*, to be licensed to acquire firearms in Canada, individuals must demonstrate awareness of the principles relating to the safe handling and use of firearms.

To be eligible for a non-restricted firearms licence, an individual must successfully complete the Canadian Firearms Safety Course (CFSC). In order to be eligible for a restricted firearms licence, an individual must successfully complete both the CFSC and the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course (CRFSC). The CFSC and the CRFSC are fundamental firearms-education and safety-training components of the CFP. The CFP is responsible for the continued development, implementation, evaluation and revision of national firearms-safety standards, the CFSC and the CRFSC.

The CFSC was developed in partnership with the provinces and territories, national organizations with an ongoing interest in firearms safety, and many firearms instructors from across Canada. The content of this course is overseen by the Canadian Firearms Program and approved by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, and was developed to meet the mandatory requirements of section 7 of the *Firearms Act*.

SUPPORT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

The CFP supports law enforcement agencies across the country and internationally to combat the illegal smuggling, trafficking, distribution, and criminal use of firearms. Through partnerships with municipal, provincial/territorial, and other federal law enforcement and regulatory agencies, the CFP supports firearms investigations and prosecutions, tracing of crime guns, managing specialized firearms-related data, and applying the legal criteria in the *Criminal Code* to identify the classification of firearms.

National Weapons Enforcement Support Team

The National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (NWEST) is a partnership between the RCMP and Canadian municipal and provincial police services in support of law enforcement efforts to counter the illegal movement of firearms into and across Canada. NWEST supports investigations and the prosecution of persons involved in the illegal movement and criminal use of firearms, playing a vital role in the fight against organized crime and terrorism. NWEST partners with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), conducting joint investigations to intercept illegal firearms entering Canada through border crossings, and with Global Affairs Canada (GAC), addressing the issue of international firearms sales.

NWEST also works alongside US Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) on cross-border smuggling projects and investigations.

NWEST provides operational support through firearms identification and determination of legal classification based on criteria in the *Criminal Code*, as well as guidance on firearms testing and serial number restoration, including the preparation and execution of search warrants, production orders and prohibition orders. NWEST has five Firearms Operations and Support Analysts situated across the country. NWEST also assists in the prosecution of persons involved in illegal firearms activity by providing expert advice to law enforcement agencies and crown attorneys, and training to front-line law enforcement agencies across the country.

NWEST-West

In 2017, a joint investigation with the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSEU) in British Columbia led to an undercover operation to purchase firearms components used in the manufacturing of Ghost Guns used in a gang war in western Canada. This successful project included the RCMP's Forensic Laboratory in Vancouver and the Specialized Firearms Support Services team in Ottawa. The result was the addition of records to the RCMP's Firearms Reference Table (FRT), describing and classifying known receiver blanks (also called 80% receivers or unfinished receiver blanks), which has curtailed importation from the U.S. These unfinished receivers were not previously getting proactive attention by law enforcement or regulatory bodies.

The addition of these unfinished receivers to the FRT has made a significant impact on illicit firearms manufacturing, and are now used regularly by the CBSA in the interception of internet purchases shipped by mail into Canada.

NWEST-East

In October 2017, the CBSA contacted the RCMP in relation to a dual citizen/US resident with no firearms licence who had attempted to cross the border near Belleville, New Brunswick with concealed semi-automatic rifles, ammunition, prohibited devices and a quantity of cash. The investigation revealed that these firearms had been purchased in the U.S., specifically for a known organized crime group in Canada. A search warrant was also executed at the individual's Canadian residence, where additional restricted firearms were seized. NWEST members assisted by providing investigative and charge advice, as well as information on forensic firearm testing. Information was also provided by NWEST to investigators on the final disposition of the seized firearms.



Seizure of firearms in New Brunswick

Public Agents Firearms Regulations

The *Public Agents Firearms Regulations* have been in effect since 2008 and require public service agencies and public agents, including police forces, to report all agency-owned and protected (seized, turned in or found by police) firearms in their possession. In 2017, there were 1,813 public service agencies that declared an inventory of firearms (Table 11), with 25,443 firearms seized among them (Tables 12 and 13).

Table 11: Canadian public service agencies reporting possession of firearms, 2017*	
Agency type	Count of Public Agencies
Court	136
Federal agency	267
Municipal agency	53
Police academy	5
Police agency	1,078
Provincial agency	274
Total	1,813

*The numbers represent individual agencies reporting possession of firearms. In some instances, this can be an entire police force, while in other cases it may represent a single detachment of a larger police force such as the RCMP.

Province or territory	Seizures
Newfoundland and Labrador	223
Prince Edward Island	50
Nova Scotia	1,018
New Brunswick	810
Quebec	6,984
Ontario	5,999
Manitoba	805
Saskatchewan	688
Alberta	4,345
British Columbia	4,434
Yukon	20
Northwest Territories	66
Nunavut	1
Total	25,443

Class	Seized
Non-restricted	20,214
Restricted	3,476
Prohibited	1,753
Total	25,443

Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre

Firearms tracing services

The Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre (CNFTC) processes firearm tracing requests to assist national and international law enforcement agencies in their investigations by determining the origin and history of a firearm, and potentially linking the firearm to a crime.

The CNFTC has access to specialized databases, including the Canadian Firearms Information System (CFIS) and the Restricted Weapons Registration System (RWRS), to assist with firearm investigations. The CNFTC also assists the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and INTERPOL with international and trans-border tracing investigations.

Specialized Firearms Support Services

Internationally recognized firearms expertise

The Specialized Firearms Support Services (SFSS) Unit is a centre of expertise in the identification and classification of firearms in Canada. The Unit is regularly called upon to provide technical firearms information and advice to both domestic and international governments and working groups.

The Unit's primary tool to support law enforcement is the Firearms Reference Table (FRT). The FRT is a comprehensive firearms database that provides national and international law enforcement officers with information to assist in the identification and description of firearms that are subject to criminal prosecutions.

As of 2017, the FRT held 173,115 separate firearms descriptions and classifications. On average, 8,000 new firearms records are added each year. The FRT is available to all police and regulatory agencies in Canada, and is a trusted firearms identification tool relied upon by over approximately 190 INTERPOL member countries.

Firearms Internet Investigations Support Unit

Internet investigations keeping Canadians safe

The Firearms Internet Investigations Support Unit (FIISU) conducts open source internet investigations regarding firearms licensing, renewal and continuous eligibility. These investigations assist in determining whether a more exhaustive review is required and to confirm any indications of behaviour and/or affiliations that may provide grounds for licence refusal or revocation. These grounds include, but are not limited to: the criminal use/storage/transportation of firearms, illicit trafficking, and illegal movement of firearms. FIISU coordinates and collaborates with law enforcement agencies at the municipal, regional, provincial/territorial, federal, and international levels to assist in the collection of case-specific information pertaining to ongoing law enforcement investigations. FIISU has established and participated in specialized working groups and project teams to assist partners such as the CBSA, in the interdiction of illegal firearms smuggling. FIISU has also assisted the ATF in developing online investigative best practices and processes to combat the criminal use of firearms, and to develop firearms investigation enforcement techniques.

In October 2017, Toronto Police Firearm Enforcement Officers seized a high-powered machine pistol, ammunition, and drugs following search warrants at two residences. FIISU, using open source techniques and in conjunction with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) and Ontario's Provincial Weapons Enforcement Unit, helped to identify a firearms trafficker who was involved in international firearms smuggling into Canada.

Toronto police then executed warrants at two residents and seized a Kimel Industries AP-9 pistol, two high-capacity magazines, ammunition, and a quantity of cocaine and marijuana. Two men were charged with a combined total of 13 offences. It is alleged that the accused were using websites to facilitate the illegal importation of firearms and firearm parts. This is just one example of how FIISU's investigative techniques are benefiting joint-forces investigations, both domestically and internationally.

MOVING FORWARD

The CFP, as Canada's centre for firearms expertise, continues to demonstrate its commitment to enhancing firearms safety and combatting firearms crime.

In 2018, the CFP will provide support to the Government of Canada's Guns and Gangs Initiative. The Initiative, which seeks to reduce gun crime and criminal gang activities, stems from the Summit on Gun and Gang Violence hosted by Public Safety Canada in March 2018. This initiative brings together federal, provincial and territorial efforts to support community-level prevention and enforcement efforts, and build and leverage federal expertise to advance intelligence related to the illegal trafficking of firearms.

The CFP will also advance the modernization of its web services in 2018, and will continue to provide operational and technical support to law enforcement agencies. The CFP will maintain its high standards of client service excellence, for its more than two million individual and business firearms clients. The CFP considers the safety of Canadians to be its top priority.