



COMMISSIONER OF FIREARMS

2018 REPORT

THE RCMP CANADIAN FIREARMS PROGRAM
CANADA'S AUTHORITY ON FIREARMS



CONTACT INFORMATION

RCMP Canadian Firearms Program
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0R2

1 800 731 4000 (toll free)
1 613 825 0315 (fax)

Web site: www.rcmp.gc.ca/cfp
Email: cfp-pcaf@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Media Relations:
Royal Canadian Mounted Police
1 613 843 5999

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Royal Canadian Mounted Police
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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF FIREARMS



The Canadian Firearms Program (CFP) and its dedication to enhancing public safety is in direct alignment with the mission of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). A national program responsible for the administration of the *Firearms Act* and regulations, the CFP also works closely with partners and stakeholders to promote firearms safety and provide expertise and assistance to law enforcement.

In 2018, the CFP continued to develop resources and strategic and operational support services as part of the broader Government of Canada initiative to reduce gun and gang violence. The Program's Business Web Services added more than 100 Canadian firearms retailers to its online portal, allowing those businesses to perform firearms registrations and transfers. In addition, the CFP's continuous eligibility screening model was updated to include a new gender option of "other", better reflecting the diversity of the public we serve.

For a glimpse of the CFP's contributions to responsible stewardship of federal firearms legislation, client service, and firearms safety awareness, refer to the "Canadian Firearms Program by the Numbers" section on page 8.

It is my privilege to present the 2018 Commissioner of Firearms Report.

Commissioner Brenda Lucki
Commissioner of Firearms
Royal Canadian Mounted Police

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The 2018 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 resulting from the 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 and client experience;
- 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 support and technical information.
- *Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)*: Assesses and confirms imported firearms declarations 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 prosecution of criminals involved in the smuggling, trafficking and criminal use of firearms with provincial/territorial and municipal law enforcement units.
- *International partners*: Assists in preventing 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 tracing 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 falls under the authority of 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 CFOs for each province and territory, and the registration of restricted and prohibited firearms through the Registrar of Firearms (Registrar).

The CFP's national firearms safety education and awareness programs are key components for the safe use of firearms. The CFP also works with partner organizations and provincial/territorial governments to disseminate information to firearm owners and the general public.

2018: Canadian Firearms Program by the Numbers



NOTEWORTHY IN 2018

Supporting Actions Against Guns and Gangs in Canada

The *Initiative to Take Action Against Gun and Gang Violence* (ITAAGGV) is a significant component of the government's priority to address gun and gang violence in Canada. Aimed at supporting the development of initiatives to reduce gun crime and criminal gang activity, it aligns federal, provincial/territorial and community-level efforts to support prevention and enforcement efforts. Under ITAAGGV, the CFP has committed to expanding and enhancing existing services including:

- bolstering investigative firearms support nationwide;
- increasing capacity to conduct physical firearms inspections; and
- providing anonymous online capability to investigate firearm trafficking and smuggling.

As part of this priority, the Criminal Firearms Strategic and Operational Support Services (CFSOSS) Section was established in 2018 to build capacity that will provide ITAAGGV partners with the necessary tools, strategic analysis and research, program and policy development support, and ensure an integrated and coordinated approach to reducing criminal gun usage and gang violence through effective communication among ITAAGGV partners.

In March 2018, the CFP contributed to a Summit on Gun and Gang Violence to engage stakeholders and address challenges, opportunities and best practices for reducing firearms crime and gang-related violence in Canada. More than 180 individuals, including representatives of community, youth and Indigenous organizations, as well as law enforcement, criminal justice, all levels of government, former gang members, academics, and victims of violence, participated in the summit and provided perspectives and input on these important issues.

20th Anniversary of the *Firearms Act* Coming into Force

December 1, 2018 marked the 20th anniversary of the coming into force of the *Firearms Act*. Over the last two decades, there have been significant legislative and regulatory developments, including:

1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The <i>Firearms Act</i>, <i>Bill C-68</i>, comes into force on December 1, 1998. ▪ The <i>Firearms Act</i> Regulations are passed in March 1998. ▪ Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories “opt out” of administering the <i>Act</i> themselves. The RCMP supports and oversees the Chief Firearms Officers for these provinces.
2001	As of January 1, 2001, Canadians need a licence to possess a firearm.
2002	British Columbia, Yukon Territory, and Newfoundland and Labrador “opt out” of administering the <i>Act</i> themselves. The RCMP now supports and oversees the Chief Firearms Officers for these jurisdictions, as well.
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Commissioner of Firearms, who has overall responsibility for the administration of the program, is appointed. ▪ As of January 1, 2003, individuals and businesses need a registration certificate for all firearms in their possession, including non-restricted rifles and shotguns. ▪ <i>Bill C-10A: An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Firearms) and the Firearms Act</i> receives Royal Assent on May 13, 2003 and certain elements come into force. This legislation was intended to simplify compliance with the firearms program, to modernize administrative procedures and to meet Canada’s emerging international obligations with regard to firearms.
2005	Remaining elements of <i>Bill C-10A</i> come into force, which improve service delivery, streamline processes and improve transparency and accountability.
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responsibility for the administration of the <i>Firearms Act</i> is transferred to the RCMP in May 2006. ▪ The Commissioner of the RCMP assumes the role of the Commissioner of Firearms.
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The <i>Public Agents Firearms Regulations</i> come into force on October 31, 2008, which means that agencies with protected firearms now require reporting to the Registrar of Firearms. ▪ The RCMP amalgamates its firearms-related sections into one integrated group, the Canadian Firearms Program.

2012	<i>Bill C-19: The Ending the Long-Gun Registry Act</i> comes into force on April 5, 2012, mandating that the registration of non-restricted firearms is no longer required. In October 2012, all non-restricted firearms registration records, except for Quebec, are destroyed. In April 2012, the Government of Quebec files a court challenge to <i>Bill C-19</i> , and due to a series of court orders and undertakings, non-restricted firearms registration requirements for the province of Quebec are retained, and Quebec residents continue to register non-restricted firearms until March 27, 2015 when the Supreme Court of Canada makes a final decision of the challenge. The official Quebec non-restricted firearm records are destroyed in April 2015.
2015	<i>Bill C-42: The Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act</i> receives Royal Assent on June 18, 2015. This legislation amends the <i>Firearms Act</i> and the <i>Criminal Code</i> . On September 2, 2015, provisions of <i>Bill C-42</i> come into force. Among them, the elimination of the Possession Only Licence (POL) and conversion of all existing POLs to Possession and Acquisition Licences and amendments to the Authorization to Transport for restricted and prohibited firearms. This same year, the CFP's client base surpasses two million.

CFP CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC SAFETY

Firearms Licensing

In Canada, an individual must possess a valid firearms licence to be authorized to acquire 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 regime, individuals must apply to the 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 main types of firearms licences available to individuals in Canada:

1. The Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL), issued to individuals aged 18 and older.
2. The Minor's Licence, primarily issued to individuals between the ages of 12 and 17 to use, but not acquire, a firearm.

Section 5 of the *Firearms Act* provides CFOs with criteria to be considered in determining eligibility to obtain a new 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.

As of December 31, 2018, there were 2,183,827 licensed 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	314,816	1,975	316,791
British Columbia	300,801	974	301,775
Manitoba	90,562	545	91,107
New Brunswick	69,962	149	70,111
Newfoundland and Labrador	76,400	402	76,802
Northwest Territories	5,926	29	5,955
Nova Scotia	75,344	836	76,180
Nunavut	3,908	4	3,912
Ontario	612,754	3,735	616,489
Prince Edward Island	6,348	15	6,363
Quebec	499,995	63	500,058
Saskatchewan	110,247	326	110,573
Yukon	7,662	49	7,711
Total Provinces	2,174,725	9,102	2,183,827

In 2018 alone, the CFP issued 428,576 individual licences, including new licences and renewals for Possession and Acquisition licences and new licences for minors (Table 2).

Table 2: Number of individual licences issued (including new and renewals), 2018	
Licence type	Licence count
Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL)	424,361
Minor's Licence	4,215
Total	428,576

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, 2018, there were 4,442 firearms businesses in Canada licensed under the *Firearms Act*, not including carriers and museums. Of these, 2,004 were licensed to only sell ammunition (Table 3).

Table 3: Valid Business licences by authorized purpose 2014 to 2018					
Licence Purpose	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Business Licence	4,641	4,522	4,495	4,478	4,442
Ammunition Only	2,345	2,117	2,026	2,022	2,004

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 approximately 1,400 shooting ranges in Canada in 2018.

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 2018, there were 827 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 unless the individual has been prohibited for owning firearms through a court-ordered firearms prohibition order.

As part of the CFP mandate to promote public safety, firearms licence applicants are screened to assess their eligibility to possess a firearms licence. After a firearms licence is issued, continuous eligibility screening is conducted over the term of the licence. Information that is 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).

Table 4: Number of firearms licence application refusals, 2014 to 2018	
Year	Refusals
2014	805
2015	688
2016	771
2017	817
2018	827
Total	3,908

Table 5: Reasons for firearms licence application refusals, 2018*	
Reason	Refusals
Court-ordered prohibition/probation	252
Domestic violence	37
Drug offences	18
Mental health	183
PAL ineligible	8
Potential risk to others	208
Potential risk to self	152
Provided false information	162
Unsafe firearm use and storage	18
Violent behaviour	66
*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.	

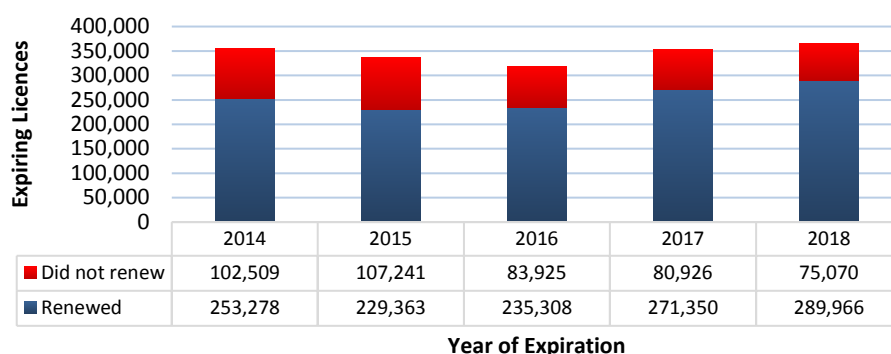
Firearms licence renewals

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 CFO of any address changes, which helps ensure they receive the renewal notice.

A total of 365,036 individual PAL licences expired in 2018 (Chart 1). Moreover, there were 46,614 expired licences with a restricted or prohibited firearm registered to them at the time of expiration. Of those, 43,089 licence holders renewed; however, 3,525 licence holders did not renew (Chart 2). The CFP follows up on these to determine the disposition of the firearm. Of the licences that were renewed in 2018, 57% of firearms licence holders used the CFP's online licence renewal tool through the Program's web portal.

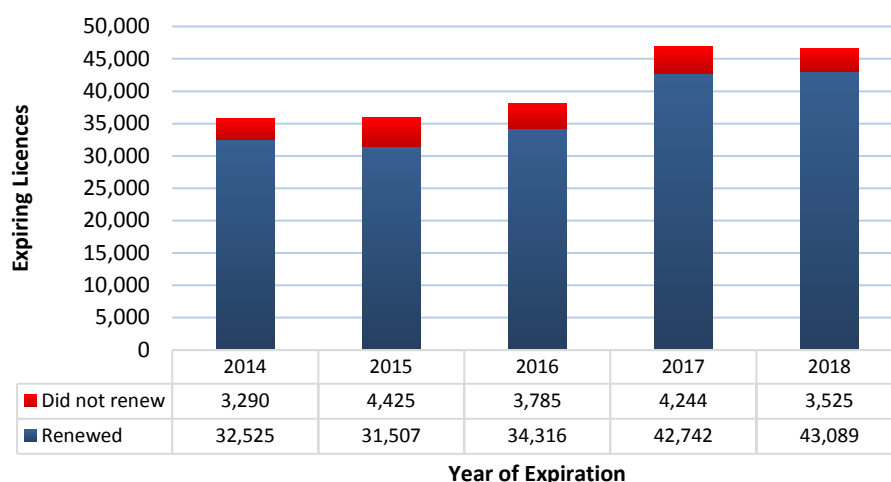
In 2017, the Governor in Council brought into force the amendment to the *Firearms Act* which provides firearms owners an automatic six-month extension period for a firearms licence that has not been renewed before the expiry date. More information on the six-month extension period can be found on the Canadian Firearms Program's website.

Chart 1: Firearms licence renewals*, 2014 to 2018



*These statistics reflect the six-month licence extension period, which extended the validity of firearms licences that expired on, or after, November 30, 2017, that were not renewed before their expiry date. The extension period may make it appear as though there was a significant inflation in the number of licences in 2018, however these numbers take into account those existing licences that were extended as a result of this initiative by the Government of Canada.

Chart 2: Licence renewal for Restricted and Prohibited privileges only and in possession of a firearm*, 2014 to 2018



*When a licence has expired, a registration revocation notice is sent to the licence holder. If there is no change in the licence holder's file, 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.

*These statistics reflect the six-month licence extension period, which extended the validity of firearms licences that expired on, or after, November 30, 2017, that were not renewed before their expiry date. The extension period may make it appear as though there was a significant inflation in the number of licences in 2018, however these numbers take into account those existing licences that were extended as a result of this initiative by the Government of Canada.

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.

If a firearms 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 or by the courts with the issuance of a Firearms Prohibition Order. A CFO is authorized to investigate the incident to determine if the client remains eligible to hold a licence.

Did You Know?

In 2018, the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) began to initiate changes to allow the entry of a third gender option/designation. A new gender determinant, "Other" option, was made available in CPIC as of April 29, 2018, further to a joint agreement between Treasury Board Secretariat and Justice Canada.

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 3,015 firearms licences revoked in 2018 (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 unless the revocation is the result of a court-ordered Firearms Prohibition. As a result, some of these revocations may have been referred to, or overturned by the courts since the initial revocation.

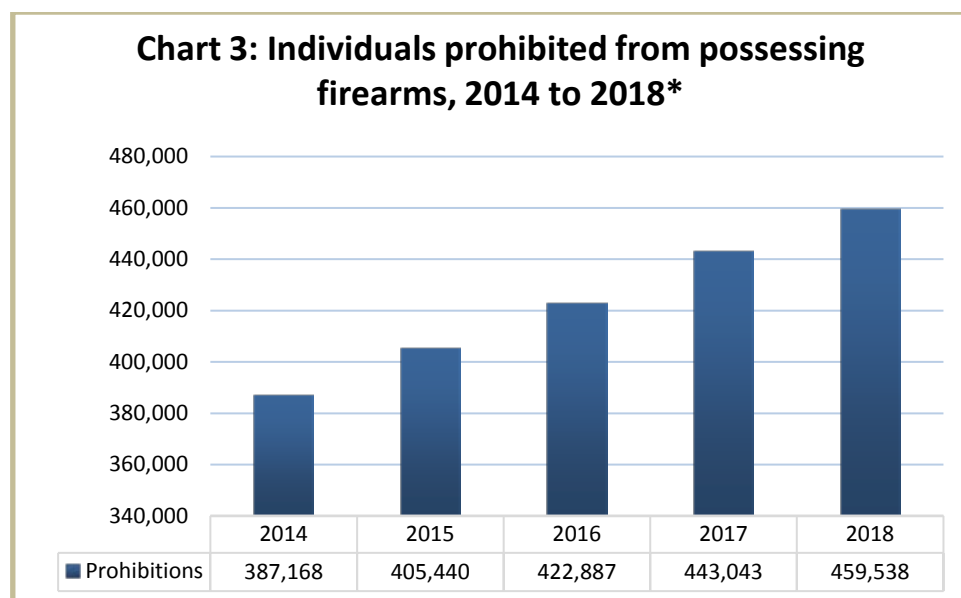
Table 6: Number of firearms licence revocations, 2014 to 2018	
Year	Revocations
2014	2,354
2015	2,347
2016	2,223
2017	2,663
2018	3,015
Total	12,602

Table 7: Reasons for firearms licence revocations, 2018*	
Reason	Revocations
Court-ordered prohibition/probation	1,611
Domestic violence	124
Drug offences	46
Mental health	535
PAL ineligible	4
Potential risk to others	685
Potential risk to self	658
Provided false information	70
Unsafe firearm use and storage	72
Violent behaviour	122
*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 Canadian Firearms Information System (CFIS) database. Therefore, individuals who have an application refused or a licence revoked, cannot evade this decision by moving from one municipal or provincial/territorial jurisdiction to another.

Firearms 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 or the revocation of a firearms licence. 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. As of December 31, 2018, there were 459,538 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, as 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 or converted 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, 2018, there were 1,164,197 restricted or prohibited firearms registered to individuals or businesses in Canada (Tables 8 and 9).

Table 8: Firearms registered to individuals or businesses, by class, 2014 to 2018*					
Firearm Class	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Restricted	726,705	795,854	839,295	907,362	983,792
Prohibited	185,793	182,493	183,333	183,068	180,405
Total	912,498	978,347	1,022,628	1,090,430	1,164,197
*Data captured as of December 31 st of each year.					

Table 9: Firearms registered to individuals or businesses, by class and province or territory, 2018			
Province or territory	Restricted	Prohibited	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	8,365	1,528	9,893
Prince Edward Island	2,586	753	3,339
Nova Scotia	25,680	6,158	31,838
New Brunswick	18,713	4,332	23,045
Quebec	93,342	26,927	120,269
Ontario	365,006	73,949	438,955
Manitoba	37,101	5,343	42,444
Saskatchewan	52,266	7,821	60,087
Alberta	193,437	24,868	218,305
British Columbia	181,406	27,910	209,316
Yukon	2,912	362	3,274
Northwest Territories	1,681	305	1,986
Nunavut	395	26	421
Other	902	123	1,025
Total	983,792	180,405	1,164,197

Firearms registration application refusals and certificate revocations

The Registrar of Firearms has the authority to revoke registration certificates and refuse firearms registration applications. In 2018, there were 17 firearm registration applications refused and 3,411 firearm registration certificates revoked (Table 10).

Table 10: Number of registration refusals and revocations, 2014 to 2018*			
Year	Applications refused	Certificates revoked	Total
2014	105	58,609	58,714
2015	60	7,159	7,219
2016	59	6,825	6,884
2017	46	8,285	8,331
2018	17	3,411	3,428
Total	287	84,289	84,576
<p>*Note: The 2014 total includes non-restricted firearms for Quebec, but not for other provinces. In 2014, registration refusals were calculated by refusal date, whereas prior to 2014, they were calculated by application date. The significant decrease in 2015 is attributed to the deletion of non-restricted registrations in Quebec.</p> <p>*Note: In the Commissioner of Firearms 2017 Report, the total number of certificates revoked was incorrectly reported. The correct total appears above.</p>			

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 CFP 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*.

SAFE COMMUNITIES

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 U.S. 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*, including the preparation and execution of search warrants, production orders and prohibition orders. 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.

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 2018, there were 1,832 public service agencies that declared an inventory of firearms (Table 11), with 25,430 firearms seized among them (Tables 12 and 13).

Table 11: Canadian public service agencies reporting possession of firearms, 2018*	
Agency type	Count of Public Agencies
Court	136
Federal agency	274
Municipal agency	55
Police academy	5
Police agency	1,086
Provincial agency	276
Total	1,832
*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.	

Table 12: Firearms seized, by public service agencies, by province or territory, 2018	
Province or territory	Seizures
Newfoundland and Labrador	400
Prince Edward Island	126
Nova Scotia	1,095
New Brunswick	664
Quebec	6,406
Ontario	6,798
Manitoba	1,242
Saskatchewan	650
Alberta	3,427
British Columbia	4,581
Yukon	17
Northwest Territories	24
Nunavut	0
Total	25,430

Table 13: Firearms seized, by public service agencies, by class, 2018	
Class	Seized
Non-restricted	20,030
Restricted	3,708
Prohibited	1,692
Total	25,430

Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre

Firearms tracing services

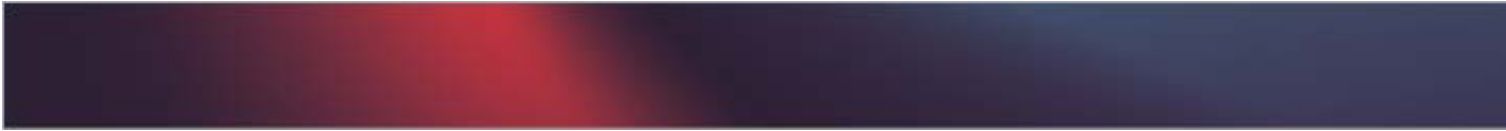
The Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre (CNFTC) processes firearm tracing requests to assist national and international law enforcement agencies in their investigations by determining the origin and history of a firearm, and potentially linking the firearm to a crime. In 2018, the Program received 1,145 firearms tracing requests.

The CNFTC has access to specialized databases 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

Firearms identification 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 December 31, 2018, the FRT held 179,833 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 194 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 the CFO in determining a client's eligibility to possess (or continue to possess) a firearms licence.

FIISU also 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.

The CFP, as Canada's centre for firearms expertise, continues to demonstrate its commitment to enhancing firearms safety and combatting firearms crime. The CFP considers the safety of Canadians to be its top priority.