



Department of Justice  
Canada

Ministère de la Justice  
Canada

# Canada's Firearms Control Law

## CANADIAN FIREARMS SAFETY COURSE



Canada

When you apply for a Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC), the law requires you to show that you have passed the approved test in:

- the safe handling and use of firearms, and
- the laws relating to firearms.

This law came into effect on January 1, 1994, in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, Prince Edward Island and the Yukon. It is scheduled to take effect on April 1, 1994, in Manitoba, New-Brunswick, Nova-Scotia and Newfoundland, and on September 1, 1994, in Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories.

The law applies to FAC renewals and to first-time FAC applications.

Successful completion of the test is valid for life nationwide, with one exception. If you have ever been prohibited from possessing a firearm, and you wish to apply for an FAC, you must finish the prohibition period and then both complete the course and pass the test before applying.

The law gives the firearms officer the discretion to certify your competence if:

- you have owned a firearm since January 1, 1979, and
- the firearms officer is satisfied and can document that you understand the law relating to firearms and the basic operations of common hunting and sporting firearms, and are competent in the safe handling and use of firearms.

You may try the test without taking the course if you feel you have sufficient firearms safety knowledge and experience. However, the full course is recommended. Any member of the public is welcome to take the course to learn safe firearms practices.

The **Canadian Firearms Safety Course** is the approved course for most FAC applicants.

## **Canadian Firearms Safety Course**

The value of education in reducing firearms injuries has been demonstrated by local and provincial/territorial firearms safety courses. The **Canadian Firearms Safety Course** is based on national standards for knowledge of firearms and firearms laws, and for safe firearms handling. It is a comprehensive entry-level course where you will learn all aspects of safe and responsible firearms ownership and use. The course is not meant to teach marksmanship or shooting accuracy.

Research shows that many firearms deaths and injuries might have been prevented by safer storage and transportation practices. Therefore, the **Canadian Firearms Safety Course** emphasizes the secure storage and transportation of firearms and ammunition, as well as practices for the safe handling and use of firearms.



The **Canadian Firearms Safety Course**, by means of discussion, demonstrations, video presentations and practical exercises, helps students learn:

- how the various types of firearms and ammunition work;
- safe handling and carrying skills;
- safe loading and unloading techniques;
- safe field and range practices, and safe firing positions;
- safe methods to store, display and transport firearms; and
- the legal and social responsibilities of firearm owners.

The **Canadian Firearms Safety Course** takes approximately 12 hours and can be given in one or more sessions, depending on the group and location. People with a new FAC wishing to hunt, target-shoot, and so on, will likely require additional training in those skills.

The two-part test covers safety practices and knowledge of the firearms law, not shooting skills or detailed technical knowledge. The 20-minute practical test requires you to demonstrate safe handling, loading and unloading practices. The written test, also 20 minutes long, can be conducted orally if necessary.

Because each province and territory is responsible for implementing the course and test, the framework and fee schedules for instruction and testing may vary across Canada. Your firearms officer/police service has information about course and test availability in your area and how to apply. In most places a combined application/report form is used; you can show the completed report form when you apply for an FAC to prove that you have successfully completed the course or test. If you take the full **Canadian Firearms Safety Course** and are successful in the test, you will receive recognition in the form of a card or certificate.

Instructors and examiners for the **Canadian Firearms Safety Course** receive training and are certified through the Chief Provincial/Territorial Firearms Officer (CP/TFO). Only test results from certified instructors and examiners are valid for FAC purposes. It is your responsibility to check with the firearms officer that the instructor/examiner is certified.

You may obtain the **Canadian Firearms Safety Course Student's Handbook** for use in the course or for your own reference. Contact your local firearms officer or CP/TFO for information about where to purchase this handbook. The Student's Handbook is also available at most public libraries.

The **Canadian Firearms Safety Course** was developed by the federal Department of Justice in partnership with the Chief Provincial/Territorial Firearms Officers and hunter safety and firearms experts from the provinces and territories.

March 1994



Published by authority of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada by the Communications and Consultation Branch, Department of Justice Canada, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H8  
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Printed in Canada