

Commissioner of Firearms

2022 Report |

**The RCMP Canadian
Firearms Program**

**Canada's Authority
on Firearms**



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Message from the Commissioner



I am pleased to present the 2022 edition of the Commissioner of Firearms Report highlighting the results of the Canadian Firearms Program and its dedication to enhancing public safety.

As a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) national program, the Canadian Firearms Program administers the *Firearms Act* and regulations, delivers specialized support services to law enforcement and partners, and promotes firearms safety.

In 2022, investments in the Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre yielded strong returns with a significant increase in firearms being traced. Firearm tracing allows for the creation of a chain of custody, domestically and internationally, from the manufacturer to the licensed dealer and to the purchaser. These firearms trace results contributed to investigations that helped curtail firearms smuggling and trafficking.

Additionally, investments are assisting the Canadian Firearms Program to reduce manual processes by introducing a modern electronic solution to deliver services to Canadians. The Canadian Firearms Digital Services Solution project strives to elevate the client experience, drive operational excellence, enable accessible data and improve public safety. The online Possession and Acquisition Licence application is now available, with more online options for service coming in the near future.

The Canadian Firearms Program is Canada's technical centre of expertise for firearms. They provide identification and description of firearms, training, investigative support and advice to Canadians, domestic and international police and governments and working groups.

I am proud of all that the Canadian Firearms Program has accomplished. The program continues to deliver on its promise to enhance public safety, while supporting the lawful ownership and use of firearms in Canada.

Mike Duheme

Commissioner of the RCMP

Message from the Director General of the Canadian Firearms Program



As 2022 marked the shift from adapting to the pandemic to better serving Canadians in the post-pandemic world, we are especially proud of what we accomplished this year.

The Canadian Firearms Program operationalized a number of Government of Canada commitments flowing from *Bill C-71* and the changes to the handgun regulations, which resulted in a higher than usual volume of telephone calls and correspondence from the public.

Another achievement that significantly benefited our clients was the reduction of the backlog of firearm licence applications, which had grown considerably over the previous two years of the pandemic. Increased staffing, staff realignment, process reengineering and modernizing online options for the program's services all contributed to reducing the backlog and improving service to our clients. Of particular note, the launch of online applications for new Possession and Acquisition Licences is a cornerstone of the program's digital transformation, allowing individuals to apply online for a new licence.

Investments in firearms tracing have also shown significant dividends. More police services across the country have embraced this investigative avenue. The Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre has improved its services to law enforcement by implementing new reporting tools and technologies, and hired more investigators. Successful traces can lead to the disruption of firearms smuggling and illegal arms dealing within Canada.

The Canadian Firearms Program also takes pride in its partnerships, particularly with provincial and territorial Chief Firearms Officers. Their contributions to firearms safety training, licensing, business inspections and other firearms services are indispensable to the program's success and public safety.

I would like to thank provincial and federal staff for the innovation and resilience they have shown in the past year, for driving modern approaches to providing services, and enhancing the safety of Canadians.

Kellie Paquette

Director General, Canadian Firearms Program

rcmp.ca/en/firearms

Stats that apply for the entire year:

Licensing

③ **2,272,760**
firearms licence holders, which includes

> **1,506,874**
non-restricted licence holders

> **8,613**
Minor's Licence holders

> **716,348**
restricted licence holders

> **41,520**
prohibited licence holders

③ **1,285,832**
registered firearms – only restricted and prohibited firearms need to be registered

③ **4,091**
licensed firearms businesses, not including museums and carriers

Tracing

③ **5,022**
firearms traced

③ **2,985**
crime guns identified

Firearms Reference Table

③ **2,661**
new records added

③ **5,714**
records updated

Public information support

③ **66,900**
email inquiries received

③ **21,019**
Canadian Firearms Registry Online queries per day

③ **360,383**
pieces of incoming mail, including inquiries and mail-in applications

③ **3,123,273**
phone calls received, including Firearms Service Delivery Directorate and Chief Firearms Offices across Canada

The Canadian Firearms Program

The Canadian Firearms Program's mission is to enhance public safety by providing expert technical advice on the regulatory framework, ensure compliance of the firearms regulatory regime and to support law enforcement in the prevention and investigation of firearms crime and misuse.

In pursuit of its mission, the Canadian Firearms Program:

- /// supports the lawful ownership and use of firearms in Canada by regulating firearms licensing and registration, and provides firearms owners 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 and service delivery;
- /// commits to ongoing improvement and innovation to achieve the highest levels of service and user experience;
- /// engages its clients and stakeholders to review and develop policies, and to communicate critical information on program requirements and results;
- /// manages its resources efficiently to provide good value for money; and
- /// provides clear and accurate reporting of program performance and resource management.

Partners

The program works with various domestic and international partners, by:

- ▮ providing firearms-related policy support and technical information to **Public Safety Canada**;
- ▮ providing technical guidance on firearms-related questions for international, cross-border issues to the **Canada Border Services Agency** and **Global Affairs Canada**;
- ▮ supporting the **Department of Justice** and Public Safety Canada on legal policy development in firearms-related criminal law;
- ▮ supporting **Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada** and **Indigenous Services Canada** on firearms legislation and related issues that are of particular interest to Indigenous Peoples;
- ▮ collaborating with **municipal, provincial and territorial law enforcement agencies** on investigations leading to prosecution of individuals involved in the smuggling, trafficking and criminal use of firearms; and
- ▮ working with **international partners**, including law enforcement agencies from the United States and INTERPOL, to help reduce the illegal movement of firearms across borders and sharing of the Firearms Reference Table with 195 countries.

Noteworthy in 2022

Elements of *Bill C-71* coming into force

Bill C-71 updated several aspects of the firearms legislation, and received Royal Assent in 2019. Various provisions have come into force over time to allow firearms owners, businesses and the Canadian Firearms Program to prepare for the changes. Two provisions came into force in May 2022.

First, individuals and businesses [transferring a non-restricted firearm](#) are now required to first obtain a reference number from the Registrar of Firearms (the Registrar). By issuing this reference number, the Registrar is confirming the validity of the firearms licence of the person receiving the firearm (a reference number may be obtained through the Canadian Firearms Program's [web services portals](#)). The Registrar does not collect any information on the non-restricted firearm being transferred.

This requirement resulted in a high volume of calls and emails to the program, as buyers and sellers complied with this new requirement. For the first time, this year's report includes metrics about this process and how it is working (see table below).

Bill C-71 – Licence verification

Number of reference number requests received	267,996
Number of reference numbers issued	260,699
Number of reference number requests refused	7,297

Note: A reference number may not be issued if, for example, a buyer does not have a valid Possession and Acquisition Licence.

Second, firearms businesses are also required to retain, for at least 20 years, the sales and inventory records related to non-restricted firearms, including make, model and serial number. This requirement ensures the records are available for supporting an investigation or a prosecution of firearms-related offences, such as firearms trafficking. Businesses create the records based on their own inventory systems, and they, not government, keep these records. Police will require judicial authorization to access records. Companies that go out of business must forward their records to the Registrar, who may destroy the records 20 years after receiving them.

Prior to this, changes to automatic Authorizations to Transport restricted and prohibited firearms, and mandatory lifetime background checks for licence applicants had been brought into force in July 2021. These two legislative changes now make it mandatory for Chief Firearms Officers to consider eligibility factors for the duration of a person’s life when determining whether or not they are eligible to hold a firearms licence, and require licensed owners of registered firearms to apply to the Chief Firearms Officer for an Authorization to Transport a restricted or prohibited firearm to any place other than to (a) an approved shooting club or shooting range within the owner’s province of residence, or (b) to the firearm’s place of storage after purchase.

I Bill C-71 – Changes to Authorizations to Transport requirements

Number of Authorizations to Transport issued to licence holders (not including section 35 non-residents) in 2022	6,256
Of the total of Authorizations to Transport issued to licence holders in 2022, the total number issued for:	
Transport to or from a port of entry (including for purposes of export/import);	337
Transport to a gunsmith	87
Transport to a gun show	87
Transport for the purpose of delivering a Canadian Firearms Program-approved restricted firearms safety course	608
Transport to a law enforcement officer, a firearms officer, or a Chief Firearms Officer	1

Changes in handgun regulations in 2022

In August, Global Affairs Canada introduced [temporary import control measures related to restricted handguns](#). All individuals and businesses importing a restricted handgun into Canada now require an import permit issued by Global Affairs Canada.

In October, two [changes to handgun regulations](#) were introduced that restricted Chief Firearms Officers' ability to authorize the transfer and issuance of Authorizations to Transport handguns.

A national freeze on the sale, purchase, and transfer of handguns by individuals within Canada came into force by regulations, which also means that bringing newly-acquired handguns into Canada would no longer be permitted.

A Chief Firearms Officer may authorize the transfer of a handgun to an individual only if the individual buying the handgun needs the handgun for at least one of the following reasons:

1. to protect the life of an individual or other individual pursuant to an Authorization to Carry issued as per section 20(a) of the *Firearms Act*;
2. for use in connection with his or her lawful profession or occupation pursuant to an Authorization to Carry issued as per section 20(b) of the *Firearms Act*; or
3. to train, compete or coach in a handgun shooting discipline that is on the programme of the International Olympic Committee or the International Paralympic Committee, and the individual provides a letter to a Chief Firearms Officer from a provincial or national sport shooting governing body indicating:
 - a. that the individual trains, competes or coaches in such a discipline;
 - b. the specific discipline in which the individual trains, competes or coaches; and
 - c. that the handgun that the individual seeks to acquire is necessary for training, competing or coaching in that specific discipline.

Bill C-21 tabled in the House of Commons

As part of the Government's comprehensive strategy to address firearms violence and strengthen gun control in Canada, *Bill C-21* [was re-introduced in spring 2022 with changes](#). At year's end, it had passed second reading in the House of Commons, and was at the committee stage before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Promoting compliance with the firearms regulatory regime

The Canadian Firearms Program administers the *Firearms Act* and related regulations, including the licensing of individuals and businesses through [Chief Firearms Officers](#), and the registration of restricted and prohibited firearms through the Registrar. Up-to-date [fees for licences](#) are posted on the Canadian Firearms Program's website.

The Canadian Firearms Program's national firearms safety education and awareness programs are key to the safe use, handling, and storage of firearms. The Canadian Firearms Program also works with partner organizations and provincial/territorial governments to disseminate safety information to firearm owners and users, businesses, manufacturers, and to the general public.

Overseeing firearms licensing and registration

Firearms licensing and registration are the program's public-facing responsibility. These services allow for individual Canadians and businesses, including manufacturers, retail stores, shooting ranges and museums to apply for licences (to possess, carry, buy, sell or display firearms and/or ammunition) and registration certificates.

Chief Firearms Officers are responsible for overseeing certain aspects of the *Firearms Act* in their provincial and territorial jurisdictions, and have discretionary authority to:

- /// approve and refuse licensing applications for individuals and businesses;
- /// approve and refuse Authorizations to Transport and Authorizations to Carry firearms;
- /// approve shooting clubs and ranges;
- /// conduct inspections of businesses and shooting ranges;
- /// monitor the continuous eligibility of firearms licensees; and
- /// revoke licences, authorizations and approvals.

Chief Firearms Officers are responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Canadian Firearms Safety Course and the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course.

The Registrar is responsible for overseeing certain aspect of the *Firearms Act* for all provinces and territories, and has authority to:

- /// approve and refuse registration and transfer applications for individuals and businesses;
- /// approve and refuse carrier licence applications;
- /// issue and refuse licence verification requests;
- /// provide technical support for the verification of firearms;
- /// issue, refuse and revoke designations for firearm verifiers;
- /// verify accuracy of firearms classification information;
- /// process firearms description change requests;
- /// process requests for deactivation, destruction, export and antique status; and
- /// issue Public Agency Identification Numbers and process public agency firearm applications and inventories.

As of December 31, 2022, Canada had:

- /// 2,264,147 valid Possession and Acquisition Licences and 8,613 valid Minor's firearms licences (Table 1)
- /// 1,285,832 registered firearms — only restricted and prohibited firearms must be registered (Table 10)
- /// 4,091 licensed firearms businesses, not including museums and carriers. Of these, 1,663 businesses were licensed to sell only ammunition (Table 13)

The tables that follow include data on licensing.

Table 1: Individual firearms licences, by type and province or territory, 2022

Province or territory	Possession and Acquisition Licence	Minor's Licence	Total
Alberta	346,767	2,050	348,817
British Columbia	340,200	1,140	341,340
Manitoba	96,523	571	97,094
New Brunswick	71,599	115	71,714
Newfoundland and Labrador	74,526	379	74,905
Northwest Territories	5,848	21	5,869
Nova Scotia	75,976	393	76,369
Nunavut	3,356	16	3,372
Ontario	633,236	3,378	636,614
Prince Edward Island	6,661	26	6,687
Quebec	484,684	94	484,778
Saskatchewan	116,480	370	116,850
Yukon	8,291	60	8,351
Total	2,264,147	8,613	2,272,760

Table 2 provides a breakdown of Possession and Acquisition Licences year over year, since 2018.

Table 2: Number of Possession and Acquisition Licence holders and Minor's Licence holders, 2018 to 2022

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
2,183,827	2,219,344	2,206,755	2,245,842	2,272,760

In 2022, the Canadian Firearms Program issued 433,064 Possession and Acquisition Licences (new and renewed) and new Minor's Licences (Table 3).

Table 3: Number of individual licences issued (including new and renewals), 2022

Licence type	2022
Possession and Acquisition Licence	428,935
Minor's Licence	4,129
Total	433,064

In 2022, the CFP issued 432,321 individual licences, including new licences and renewals for Possession and Acquisition Licences and new Minor's Licences (Table 4).

Table 4: Number of individual licences issued by province or territory, 2022

Province or territory	Acquisition Licence			Minor's Licence			Total		
	New	Renewal	Total PAL	New	Renewal	Total Minor	New	Renewal	Renewal/ New Licences
Alberta	21,266	42,654	63,920	816	54	870	22,082	42,708	64,790
British Columbia	21,733	40,348	62,081	708	28	736	22,441	40,376	62,817
Manitoba	6,276	13,301	19,577	309	12	321	6,585	13,313	19,898
New Brunswick	3,161	9,798	12,959	46	7	53	3,207	9,805	13,012
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,429	11,573	14,002	159	9	168	2,588	11,582	14,170
Northwest Territories	330	686	1,016	8	0	8	338	686	1,024
Nova Scotia	4,102	11,188	15,290	145	26	171	4,247	11,214	15,461
Nunavut	176	272	448	8	0	8	184	272	456
Ontario	34,229	92,611	126,840	1,490	59	1,549	35,719	92,670	128,389
Prince Edward Island	368	899	1,267	8	0	8	376	899	1,275
Quebec	21,389	66,497	87,886	44	4	48	21,433	66,501	87,934
Saskatchewan	5,749	15,656	21,405	140	3	143	5,889	15,659	21,548
Yukon	437	1,065	1,502	43	2	45	480	1,067	1,547
Canada	121,645	306,548	428,193	3,924	204	4,128	125,569	306,752	432,321

Note: The numbers in this table do not include licensees outside of Canada.

Firearms fall 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 — certain handguns and fully automatic or converted automatic firearms.

In 2022, there were 1,506,874 Possession and Acquisition licences with non-restricted privileges, 716,348 with restricted privileges, and 41,520 with prohibited privileges (Table 5).

Table 5: Possession and Acquisition Licence privileges by province or territory, 2022

Province or territory	Non-restricted	Restricted	Prohibited	Unassigned*	Total PAL
Alberta	175,263	165,774	5,814	0	346,851
British Columbia	169,190	163,992	7,175	6	340,363
Manitoba	66,252	28,814	1,502	1	96,569
New Brunswick	57,530	12,585	1,537	0	71,652
Newfoundland and Labrador	66,894	7,166	471	1	74,532
Northwest Territories	4,638	1,168	41	0	5,847
Nova Scotia	54,977	19,198	1,832	0	76,007
Nunavut	3,029	307	8	0	3,344
Ontario	401,813	217,003	14,643	1	633,460
Prince Edward Island	4,682	1,828	158	0	6,668
Quebec	424,473	54,239	5,971	4	484,687
Saskatchewan	72,090	42,162	2,228	0	116,480
Yukon	6,043	2,112	140	0	8,295
Canada	1,506,874	716,348	41,520	13	2,264,755

Note: Possession and Acquisition Licence holders are able to obtain multiple privileges. These numbers in this table represent the maximum privileges a client holds. These numbers do not include Minor's Licences.

*Unassigned refers to valid licences that currently hold no acquisition privileges. This situation can occur when a licensee transfers their last grandfathered prohibited firearm and the privilege is removed at the time of the approval of the transfer.

In 2022, there were 923 firearms licence applications refused for various public safety reasons (Tables 6 and 7). Under the *Firearms Act*, Chief Firearms Officers are authorized to refuse an application for a firearms licence based on their assessment of the applicant's risk to public safety.

Table 6: Number of firearms licence application refusals, 2018 to 2022

Year	Refusals
2018	827
2019	946
2020	1,112
2021	1,227
2022	923

As part of the Canadian Firearms Program's 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 of concern that is brought to the attention of a Chief Firearms Officer may bring an individual's eligibility to hold a licence into question. That individual might then be subject to review.

Table 7: Reasons for firearms licence application refusals, 2022

Court ordered prohibition/probation	292
Domestic violence	87
Drug offences	33
Mental health	182
Possession and Acquisition Licence ineligible	12
Potential risk to others	404
Potential risk to self	197
Provided false information	205
Unsafe firearm use and storage	43
Violent behaviour	143

Note: A firearms licence application refusal can be influenced by more than one reason. Therefore, the sum of refusal reasons will exceed the annual total number of firearms licence applications refused.

Under the *Firearms Act*, Chief Firearms Officers are authorized to revoke a firearms licence based on their assessment of the licence holder’s risk to public safety. There were 3,315 firearms licences revoked in 2022 (Tables 8 and 9). 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 8: Number of firearm licence revocations, 2018 to 2022

Year	Revocations
2018	3,019
2019	3,232
2020	2,896
2021	3,096
2022	3,315

Table 9: Reasons for firearms licence revocations, 2022

Court ordered prohibition/probation	1,529
Domestic violence	183
Drug offences	42
Mental health	566
Possession and Acquisition Licence ineligible	223
Potential risk to others	775
Potential risk to self	443
Provided false information	264
Unsafe firearm use and storage	158
Violent behaviour	194

Note: The revocation of a firearms licence can be influenced by more than one reason, therefore the sum of revocation reasons will exceed the annual total of firearms licences revoked.

All restricted and prohibited firearms in Canada possessed by individuals or businesses must be registered. As of December 31, 2022, there were 1,285,832 restricted or prohibited firearms registered to individuals or businesses in Canada (Tables 10 and 11).

Table 10: Firearms registered to individuals or businesses, by class, 2018 to 2022

Firearm class	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Restricted	983,792	1,057,418	990,563	1,045,608	1,119,857
Prohibited	180,405	178,496	174,551	162,262	165,975
Total	1,164,197	1,235,914	1,165,114	1,207,870	1,285,832

Table 11: Firearms registered to individuals or businesses in Canada, by class and province or territory, 2022

Province or territory	Restricted	Prohibited	Total
Alberta	233,674	24,423	258,097
British Columbia	216,813	24,530	241,343
Manitoba	39,035	5,014	44,049
New Brunswick	21,297	3,971	25,268
Newfoundland and Labrador	9,474	1,437	10,911
Northwest Territories	1,797	269	2,066
Nova Scotia	30,150	5,699	35,849
Nunavut	351	33	384
Ontario	395,121	66,283	461,404
Prince Edward Island	3,263	746	4,009
Quebec	100,799	25,614	126,413
Saskatchewan	63,784	7,510	71,294
Yukon	3,409	329	3,738
Canada	1,118,967	165,858	1,284,825

Note: The numbers in this table do not include firearms registered outside of Canada.

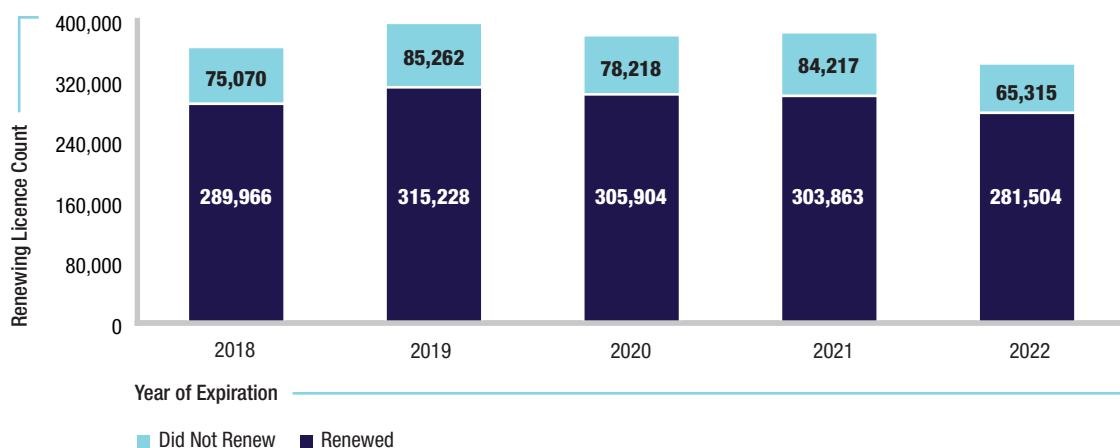
The Registrar of Firearms has the authority to refuse firearm registration applications and revoke registration certificates based on a failure to meet the eligibility criteria under the *Firearms Act*. In 2022, there were 11 firearm registration applications refused and 9,124 firearm registration certificates revoked (Table 12).

Table 12: Number of registration refusals and revocations, 2018 to 2022

Year	Applications refused	Certificates revoked	Total
2018	17	3,430	3,447
2019	8	6,027	6,035
2020	16	4,630	4,646
2021	12	8,021	8,033
2022	11	9,124	9,135

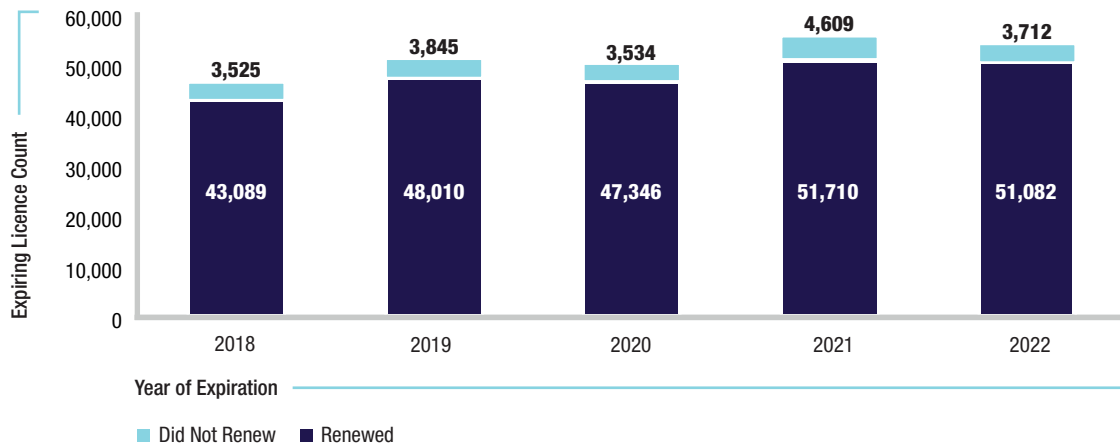
Under the *Firearms Act*, firearms licence holders are responsible for renewing their licences prior to expiry. The Canadian Firearms Program facilitates this process by sending renewal notices to licensees prior to the expiry of their current licence. A total of 346,819 individual Possession and Acquisition Licences expired in 2022 (Chart 1). There were 54,794 expired licences with a restricted or prohibited firearm registered to them at the time of expiration. Of these expired licences, 51,082 licence holders renewed them, but 3,712 licence holders did not (Chart 2). The Canadian Firearms Program works internally and with program partners to follow up on those individuals who do not renew their licences to determine the current status of their firearms.

Chart 1: Firearms licence renewals, 2018 to 2022



Note: When a licence has expired, a registration certificate revocation notice is sent to the licence holder immediately following the end of the extension period. A lack of renewal could be associated with a licence holder having disposed of his/her firearm(s), moved outside Canada, or having passed away.

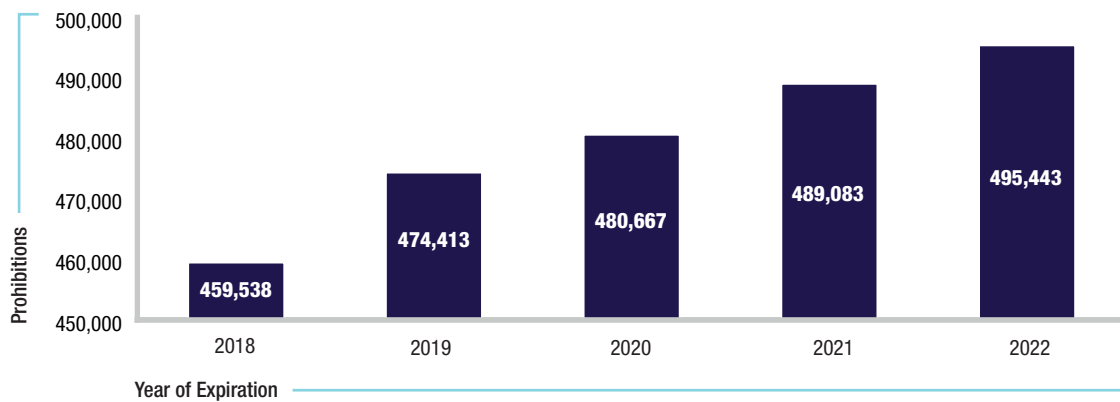
Chart 2: Individual licence renewal with restricted and prohibited privileges and in possession of a registered firearm, 2018 to 2022



Note: When a licence has expired, a registration certificate 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.

Under section 89 of the *Firearms Act*, every court, judge, or justice that makes, varies, or revokes a firearms prohibition order must notify the Chief Firearms Officer in their jurisdiction. Firearms licence applicant screening includes checking whether 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. As of December 31, 2022, there were 495,443 individuals prohibited from possessing firearms (Chart 3).

Chart 3: Individuals prohibited from possessing firearms, 2018 to 2022



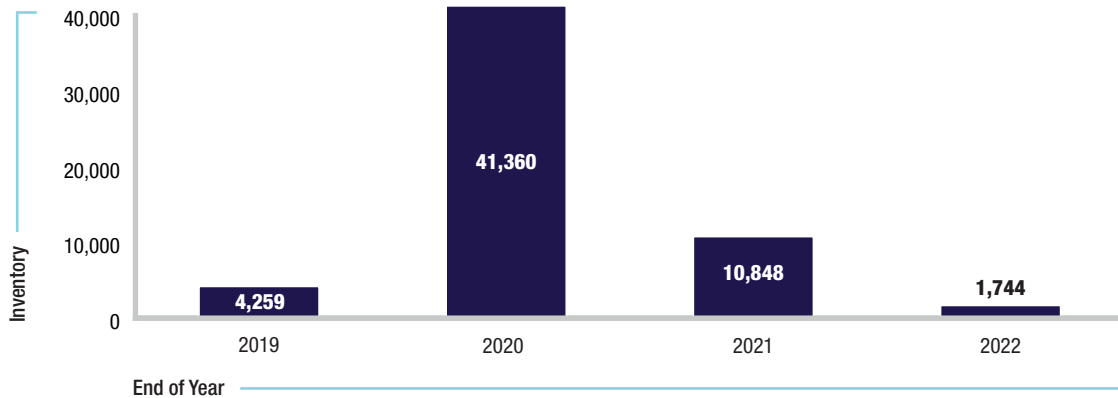
Note: Prohibition orders are for a specified period of time and can carry over from year to year. The totals reflect ongoing prohibition orders, and not only those that are newly issued.

Source: Statistics from Canadian Police Information Centre.

Reducing the inventory

Turnaround times for processing licence applications and renewals were at times challenged during the pandemic because of the program's reduced workforce and reliance on paper-based processing. Efforts to increase processing capacity by realigning and increasing staff, as well as process reengineering, helped to reduce the inventory.

Chart 4: End-of-year inventory for applications and renewals for all types of licences, 2019 to 2022



Note: "All Licences" includes Possession and Acquisition Licences, Minor's Licences, and Business licences.

Digital service delivery takes a big step

Through its Canadian Firearms Digital Services Solution Project, the Canadian Firearms Program has initiated development of a new, user-friendly online portal and case management system. Program clients clearly like services that have an online option; more than 70% of applicants have been choosing digital rather than paper for their Possession and Acquisition Licence renewals. Continuing the online service options aim to:

- /// simplify processing, both for applicants and for program staff;
- /// significantly reduce processing times; and
- /// provide enhanced service.

In 2022, the program launched two key products online, making it easier for Canadians to apply for an [Authorization to Transport](#) or a [Possession and Acquisition Licence](#). (Find out what's next in the program's digital transformation in Looking ahead.)

Online application for an Authorization to Transport

Owners of restricted or prohibited firearms must obtain an Authorization to Transport whenever they want to transport their restricted or prohibited firearm. However, there are two exceptions where transportation provisions have been added as a condition on a firearms licence which are to take a firearm to an approved shooting club or shooting range in the firearm owner's province of residence or to a place of storage for a newly purchased firearm, as authorized by the Chief Firearms Officer of jurisdiction. In response, the program offered an online Authorization to Transport application option in August 2022.

Clients can now use their computer, smart phone or tablet to log in to the Canadian Firearms Program's [Individual Web Services](#) to apply for an Authorization to Transport. They can apply at any time and, for this purpose, no longer need to communicate with the Canadian Firearms Program's contact centre. Clients can also download their Authorization to Transport document to their smart device or print it themselves. A new feature allowed visibility of all Authorizations to Transport, online and paper, to the Canadian Firearms Registry Online, a tool that allows police officers to view a subset of information collected by the Canadian Firearms Program.

This new service clearly resonates with our clients, with about one-third of all affected clients taking advantage of the service within the last five months of 2022.

Online application for a Possession and Acquisition Licence

More than two million Canadians hold a Possession and Acquisition Licence, making it one of the program's most visible products. Administration of licensing is labour-intensive, especially given that the process is still primarily paper-based. Therefore, the program is pursuing a step-by-step approach to introducing online licence application options, to: 1) ensure stringent security requirements continue to protect applicants' privacy; 2) integrate the required application information from several sources, and, 3) provide for automated and timely application updates. As a first step, a representative sample of existing clients provided valuable feedback to the program during the design phase of the project, which included Gender-based Analysis Plus, so that the online application platform serves all Canadians.

This first step has been a resounding success that will benefit both clients and the program. We are now in a position to streamline the licence application process and automate many related, administrative tasks. Submitting an online licence application removes the data capture step by program employees, which helps increase both the accuracy of licence application information and the time available for program staff to work on other tasks that benefit our clients.

The national launch of the new online application [through the MyCFP portal](#) in November 2022 generated significant interest in the new online service.



Firearms safety training classroom

Maintaining national firearm safety training standards

To be licensed to acquire firearms in Canada, individuals must pass the Canadian Firearms Safety Course before applying for a Possession and Acquisition Licence. The Canadian Firearms Safety Course is designed to apply to the broadest possible spectrum of novice firearms users; as an introductory safety course, it is intended for all new firearms users.

The course emphasizes safe storage, display, transportation, handling and use of firearms but safety depends on more than just safe physical actions. Safe handling must include greater knowledge of the firearms themselves, ammunition and the laws and regulations related to them.

Individuals who wish to acquire restricted firearms must also pass the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course.

The Canadian Firearms Program is responsible for the continued development, implementation, and evaluation of national firearms safety standards, and the content of the Canadian Firearms Safety Course and the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course. Feedback on courses is received regularly by the provinces and territories, national organizations with an ongoing interest in firearms safety, and firearms instructors from across Canada.

In addition to the safety courses, educational initiatives in jurisdictions continue to promote safe storage and handling of firearms. For example, the province of Quebec has distributed trigger locks and an information card on suicide prevention as part of safety course delivery in 2022. Students were encouraged to post the card in plain sight where their firearms are stored.

Suicide crisis

support service

1 866 APPELLE

1 866 277-3553

24 h / 7 days

Fast, confidential and free of charge!

Need assistance

Access to services | Anxiety, stress | Separation, break-up
Family conflict | Alcohol, drugs, gambling | Crisis | Depression...

811

Info-social

24 h / 7 days

Fast, confidential and free of charge!

Centre intégré
de santé et de services
sociaux de Chaudière
Appalaches

Québec

Suicide prevention card given out to Quebec training participants

Promoting compliance by firearms businesses

Businesses form an important part of the Canadian Firearms Program's client base. A business, museum or organization that manufactures, sells, possesses, handles, displays, or stores firearms or ammunition must possess a valid firearms business licence. Employees who handle firearms for these businesses must also possess valid Possession and Acquisitions Licences for the class of firearms being handled, and be listed as employees on the business licence. All restricted and prohibited firearms in a business inventory must be registered. Periodic business inspections are performed to verify safe and lawful business practices, including firearms storage and display. As of December 31, 2022, there were 4,091 firearms businesses in Canada licensed under the *Firearms Act* (Table 13).

In 2022, the Ontario Chief Firearms Officer developed the Enhanced Business Inspection Model. It promotes physical, technical, and administrative controls to help detect security risks in a way that exceeds legislative requirements. The model's emphasis on heightened security makes an important contribution to individual, business and general public safety. The Ontario Chief Firearms Officer shared the model with Chief Firearms Officers across Canada, as a best practice.

Table 13: Valid business licences, 2017 to 2022

Valid business licences	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Business licences	2,456	2,438	2,456	2,414	2,448	2,428
Ammunition only	2,022	2,004	1,981	1,740	1,710	1,663
All business licences	4,478	4,442	4,437	4,154	4,158	4,091

Note: The numbers in this table do not include museums and carriers.

Updated training for range inspections

With the introduction of updated Shooting Range Guidelines, a long-time business and range inspector for Ontario recognized an opportunity to update the training for range inspections by incorporating this new material. The updates were developed using Global Positioning System technologies, and tested at a range that hosts various shooting disciplines. The test evaluated how the Guidelines introduced in the classroom were applied in the field. The new training module was used for ongoing inspections in 2022.

This training is being reviewed as part of the national training standard for range inspections.

Supporting law enforcement agencies

The Canadian Firearms Program supported domestic and international law enforcement agencies in preventing and investigating firearms-related crimes, and in providing valuable technical and legal advice to the Canadian justice system.

National Weapons Enforcement Support

The National Weapons Enforcement Support Team offers direct support to investigators on all aspects of firearms investigations and prosecutions, and on intelligence sharing with respect to the illegal movement and criminal use of firearms. It provides expert opinion evidence to the court and support to Crown attorneys on firearms law and its application. The team also partnered with the Canada Border Services Agency to investigate and intercept illegal firearms entering Canada through border crossings, and partnered with Global Affairs Canada to investigate international firearms sales. In addition to domestic law enforcement partners, the team regularly liaises with international agencies, such as U.S. Homeland Security Investigations and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, on cross-border smuggling and investigations.

The team had a busy 2022. It responded to over 10,000 service calls from Canadian and international law enforcement agencies, regulatory partners or Crown attorneys, which represented an increase of 22% compared to 2021. This also represents a 40% increase since additional funding was received in 2019 from the *Initiative to Take Action Against Gun and Gang Violence* as part of the government's [Gang Violence Prevention and Intervention Investments](#).

In collaboration with international partners, including the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the team shared intelligence to identify and disrupt cross-border firearms smuggling. The Quebec team, alone, supported 54 cross-border firearm trafficking investigations involving U.S. partners.

In more than 200 sessions across the country, the National Weapons Enforcement Support Team trained 3,854 individuals — a 58% jump in participants and a 91% increase in training sessions since 2019. This advanced training for front-line law enforcement and Crown attorneys, and directly supported public safety.

Three firearms analyst workshops, delivered for the first time in Atlantic Canada, trained 91 participants from 19 different law enforcement agencies as firearms examiners. Besides developing knowledge and skills for firearms investigations, the participants solidified partnerships and intelligence sharing.

Partnership with retailers helps keep firearms out of the wrong hands

The National Weapons Enforcement Support Team in British Columbia partnered with an association and individual retailers to develop a retailer training program in order to identify suspicious firearm purchases.

The program was designed with the safety of retail employees in mind, as they may be exposed to the risks of firearms-related trafficking.

Crown Attorney Program

This joint endeavour between the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General and the Firearms Investigative and Enforcement Services Directorate, the Crown Attorney Program seeks to enhance prosecutorial outcomes of firearms-related offences through education, coordination and networking. The Crown Attorney Program is actively involved in building a national network of firearms prosecutors in each province and territory, through which education, training and coordination on firearms-related matters are offered.

This national program anticipated, addressed, and overcame a number of firearm-related issues (for example, problematic court decisions and forensic challenges) through national cooperation.

Firearms tracing

The Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre assists front-line policing by providing an extensive firearms tracing service for Canadian, United States and international law enforcement agencies and is the only national program that traces firearms domestically and internationally.

For all trace requests, the tracing centre investigates the history of a firearm, from its manufacture or introduction into commerce by the importer through the distribution chain (wholesalers and retailers) to identify the last known owner or business. The centre also liaises with various international law enforcement partners, including the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and INTERPOL's Integrated Weapons and Explosives Tracking System.

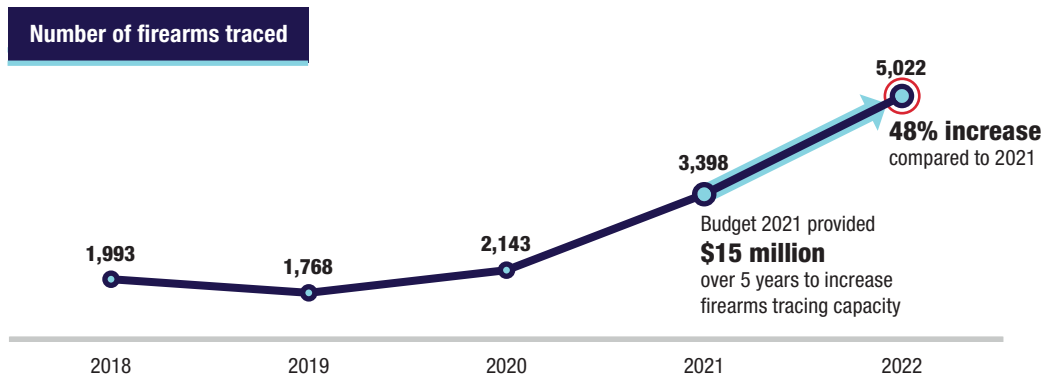
Firearm tracing provides strategic benefits in the form of linking criminal use of firearms to specific vendors, identifying trafficking routes and patterns. Tracing provides:

- // Linkages between a suspect and a firearm;
- // Flags potential traffickers;
- // Helps identify local, provincial and international firearms crime patterns;
- // Produces invaluable investigative leads; and
- // Provides law enforcement decision makers and government officials with accurate statistical data.

Investments were made in Canada's firearms control framework, and additional resources were made available through the *Initiative to Take Action Against Gun and Gang Violence*. The tracing centre hired more tracing investigators and expanded its outreach. With its greater capacity, the tracing centre was able to better support the RCMP's March 2022 policy to make tracing of all crime guns mandatory.

These investments also allowed the tracing centre to set up a new national tracing repository for capturing firearms tracing data. The repository supported the development of greater intelligence and investigative leads into firearms smuggling and trafficking.

In 2022, the tracing centre traced the origins of 5,022 firearms, a 48% increase compared to 2021.



The tracing centre also trains front-line police officers and specialized enforcement units on the strategic and tactical benefits of firearms tracing and how it helps to solve crime. It can point the way to other crimes and criminals, sometimes in unexpected ways. For example, in one case in 2022, an individual who did not possess a valid firearms licence committed suicide with a firearm. Although the firearm had not been reported lost or stolen, investigators were able to trace the firearm back to the owner. After discovering how the two individuals were connected, the investigators were able to execute a search warrant and found multiple, illegal firearms leading to firearms trafficking charges.

Calgary Police Service: making statistics count

Since 2020, the Calgary Police Service has required every recovered firearm used in a crime to be traced by the Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre. The police service has been using this information to build detailed statistics that have helped to root out repeat firearms offenders. This approach paid off by helping to identify two Americans who were holding several events for buying and selling illegal firearms. Collaboration with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in 2022 led to four individuals being charged in the United States for firearms smuggling. This case shows that firearms tracing helps to detect firearms-related crime and identify related crime risks.

Specialized Firearms Support Services

The Specialized Firearms Support Services unit is a centre of expertise for the identification and description of firearms in Canada. The unit is regularly called on to provide technical firearms information, advice and training to domestic and international governments and police services. The unit provides:

- /// overall management and maintenance of the Firearms Reference Table;
- /// digital photography of firearms and prohibited devices;
- /// delivery of training on firearm identification and firearm safety;
- /// firearm inspections and production of reports and affidavits;
- /// support for reference hearings and court proceedings;
- /// maintenance of the national firearms collection;
- /// firearm destruction; and
- /// domestic and international law enforcement agencies and government departments assistance for firearm identification and other technical support.

The team prepares and maintains the [Firearms Reference Table](#), that represents a global centre of expertise for the identification and description of firearms in Canada.

The Firearms Reference Table is a comprehensive, single-source reference tool that helps identify and describe firearms. The reference table is used by domestic and international law enforcement agencies, including 195 INTERPOL member countries. A version of the reference table is also available to the public in Portable Document Format.

The Firearms Reference Table is an administrative document tool, not a legal instrument. The Specialized Firearms Support Services unit maintains the table by conducting technical assessments of firearms based on firearm classifications set out in the *Criminal Code* and supporting regulations; the Firearms Reference Table is the most comprehensive and systematic firearms reference database in existence worldwide.

The reference table contains more than 200,000 individual records. In 2022, 2,661 new records were added and 5,714 records were updated.

Firearms Internet Investigations Support

Firearms Internet Investigations Support conducts open-source internet investigations to assist Chief Firearms Officers in assessing the eligibility for someone to hold a firearms licence.

Firearms Internet Investigations Support also works with law enforcement agencies at the municipal, regional, provincial/territorial, federal and international levels to assist in ongoing law enforcement firearms investigations.

In 2022, Firearms Internet Investigations Support conducted open-source, internet investigations in response to:

- 123 requests from law enforcement; and
- 157 requests from Chief Firearms Officers and other regulatory authorities.

Looking ahead

Firearms Marking Regulations

The federal government postponed the [changes to the Firearms Marking Regulations](#) that were scheduled to come into force in 2020, deferring them until December 1, 2023.

Next steps in the program's digital future

The Canadian Firearms Program is continuing to move more services online to better serve our clients in ways that are modern, efficient, and simple. As of 2022, the Canadian Firearms Digital Services Solution leveraged cloud-based technologies to deliver a user-friendly online portal and case management system and is in phase two of a five-phase project.

By the end of 2023, new services will include online applications for a Minor's Licence, a photo exemption, a fee waiver and changes to support the *Aboriginal Peoples of Canada Adaptations Regulations (Firearms)*. The next release, in early 2024, will include online applications for shooting clubs and ranges, and for businesses and carriers. By 2026, the project aims to have most paper-based applications and existing online services migrated to the new system.

Privately manufactured firearms

It is illegal to manufacture or possess a firearm without an appropriate, valid licence and the applicable registration certificate. In the absence of these requirements, an individual who possesses a “ghost gun” or a firearm manufactured with a 3-D printer, for example, could have their firearm seized and be charged under the *Criminal Code*.

Privately-made or manufactured firearms are a growing concern in Canada and internationally. 3-D printers and the digital blueprints needed to make a firearm are widely available, inexpensive and easy to use. There is an expanding, online community that shares information about how to manufacture these types of firearms. The Canadian Firearms Program is actively working with governments and law enforcement of domestic and international jurisdictions to address this threat.

The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security noted in its 2022 report, [“A Path Forward: Reducing Gun and Gang Violence in Canada”, Section 5.4.2](#), that the reproduction of privately-made firearms is currently unregulated in Canada, and a recognized problem. The Committee has recommended that the Government of Canada regulate the possession, sale and import of the parts used to assemble privately-made firearms; develop a strategy to counteract the manufacturing of such firearms; and amend the definition of a firearm in the *Criminal Code*.

New Shooting Range Guidelines

In 2023, the Canadian Firearms Program will publish new Shooting Range Guidelines, to improve the assessment and safety of shooting ranges.

These guidelines explain design and construction standards for ranges. Chief Firearms Officers rely on these guidelines to inform their assessment.