



Department of Justice Ministère de la Justice
Canada Canada

TECHNICAL REPORT

**FIREARM OWNERSHIP
IN CANADA**

Angus Reid Group, Inc.

March 1991

TR1991-8a

**Research, Statistics and Evaluation Directorate/
Direction générale de la recherche,
de la statistique et de l'évaluation**

**Civil Law and Corporate Management Sector/
Secteur du droit civil et gestion ministérielle**

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Department of Justice Canada. The views expressed herein are
solely those of the author and do not necessarily
represent the views of the Department of Justice Canada.*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This report presents the findings of a national survey of firearm ownership in Canada, conducted by the Angus Reid Group on behalf of the federal Department of Justice. The results of this study provide baseline information to the Department on the incidence of firearm ownership in Canada.

This national survey was conducted between February 4th and 19th, 1991 between the hours of 5:00 and 10:00 p.m. A total of 10,103 households were contacted in this survey. In each household, an adult member was questioned on whether or not their household owns any type of firearm. If a firearm was owned by the respondent or any other member of the household, the Angus Reid Group interviewer then administered the remainder of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire for this survey was developed in close consultation with representatives from the Department of Justice. The final draft questionnaire was subject to pretesting and revision in order to ensure that the question wording was clear and accurate, and that the interviews flowed smoothly. A copy of the final questionnaire employed in this study is appended to this report.

Telephone numbers for the sample were randomly generated using the Angus Reid Group's in-house computerized sample selection procedure. This program generates telephone numbers randomly by Census Division, such that the sample is selected proportionate to population distributions consistent with Census data.

All data reported in the research findings have been weighted to reflect the actual proportions of households in Canada by province and territory. The results, therefore, are taken to be representative of the Canadian population as a whole, both nationally and regionally.

In the survey, a total of 2341 households were interviewed where there was at least one firearm owned by the household. With respect to the profile of firearms owned and other measures in this survey, estimates of proportions based on a random sample of this size are accurate to within ± 2.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

The portrait of firearm owners is based upon the 1271 respondents in this survey who personally owned a firearm. The survey results concerning firearm owners are taken to be accurate to within ± 2.75 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

The prevalence of firearm ownership is estimated to be 23 percent of Canadian households. Moreover, since this estimate of firearm ownership prevalence is based upon 10,103 households, this estimate is expected to be accurate to within ± 1 percentage point at the 95 percent confidence level.

2.0 FIREARM OWNERSHIP IN CANADA

Firearms are present in approximately one out of every four households in Canada. The survey results indicate that of the roughly 9.6 million households (1990 figures) in this country, around 2.2 million own at least one type of firearm - therefore, it is estimated that nearly one-quarter (23%) of all Canadian households own a firearm. (TABLE 1)

The prevalence of households with firearms varies widely across the country. The estimated prevalence of firearms households is by far the highest in Yukon and the North West Territories (67%), followed distantly by Alberta (39%) in second place. In sharp comparison, it is estimated that the proportion of households owning at least one firearm is lowest in Ontario (15%).

The approximately 2.2 million Canadian households with a firearm own an estimated total of 5.9 million firearms. Therefore, the average number of firearms estimated to be owned by each of these households is 2.67.

Once again, there are significant regional differences in the average number of firearms per household. Consistent with the high prevalence of firearms households in Yukon/NWT, the mean estimated number of firearms owned by each household is also the highest in this part of the country (3.44). Firearms households in Manitoba/Saskatchewan also appear to own

a greater number of firearms on average (3.04) compared to similar households elsewhere in Canada, particularly in Quebec (an estimated average of 2.40 firearms per household) and Atlantic Canada (2.44).

Table 1 Firearm Ownership in Canada

	Estimated Number of Households Owing Firearms	Estimated Percentage of Households Owing Firearms	Estimated Number of Firearms	Estimated Average Nombre of Firearms per Household
(Number in 1000's)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)
Canada	2 220	23	5 925	2.67
British Columbia	291	24	822	2.82
Alberta	335	39	919	2.74
Saskatchewan	125	35	421	3.37
Manitoba	97	25	254	2.62
Ontario	529	15	1 454	2.75
Quebec	577	23	1 386	2.40
Atlantic	251	32	613	2.44
Yukon\NWT	16	67	55	3.44

In terms of the proportional distribution of the number of firearms owned by Canadian households with firearms (as opposed to an average figure), a majority - an estimated 60 percent - have one or two firearms. Based on the sample of respondents, one-third (35%)

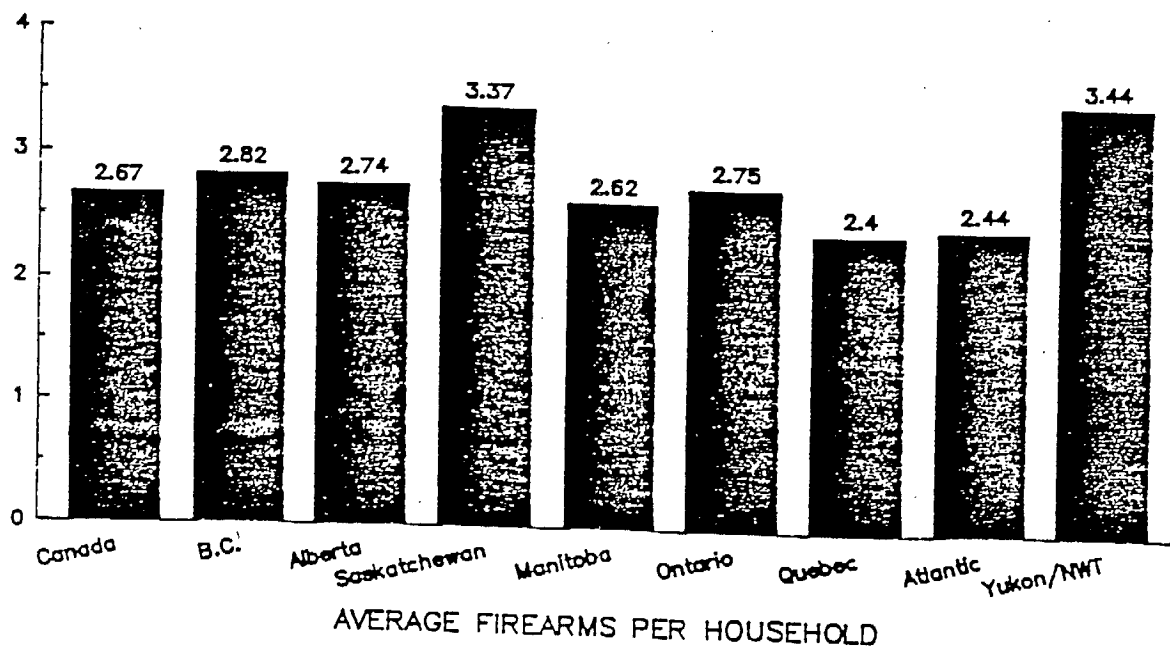
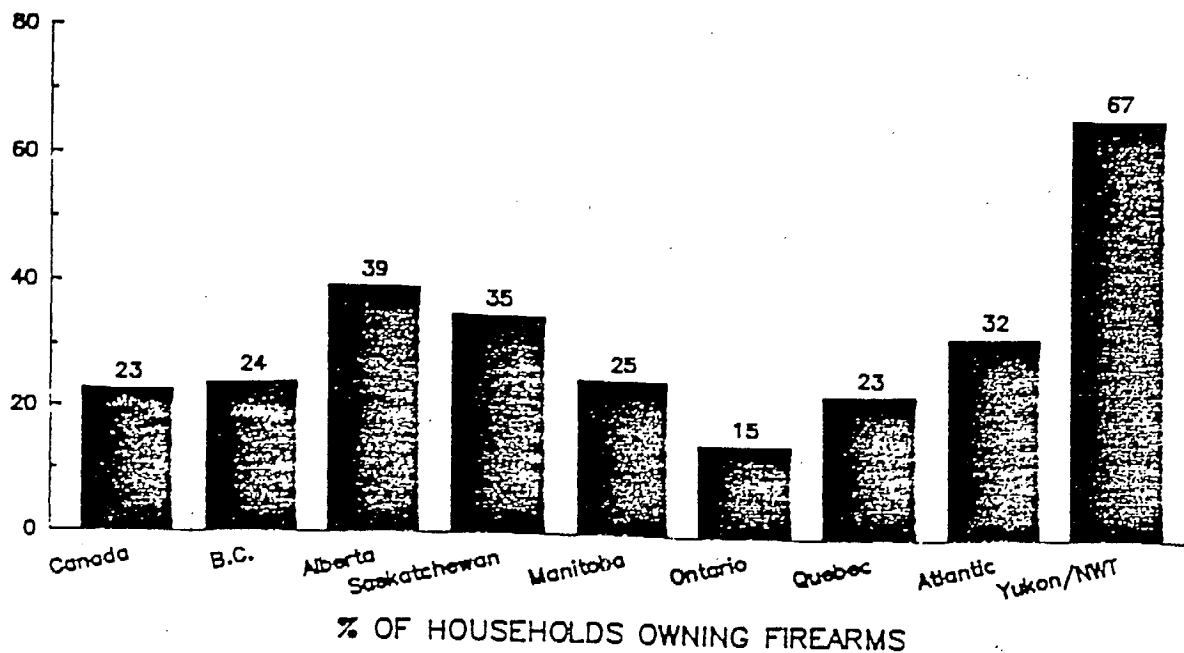
of these households own only one firearm while one-quarter (25%) have two firearms within the household. Significantly, nearly one in five (17%) households own five or more firearms. (TABLE 2)

Table 2 Number of Firearms Owned by Household

	TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD				
	Canada	Rifle Owing	Shotgun Owing	Handgun Owing	Other Firearm Owing
(BASE = Firearms Households in 1000's)	(2220) (%)	(1566) (%)	(1426) (%)	(256) (%)	(117) (%)
One	35	23	24	15	29
Two	25	28	27	13	14
Three	13	16	16	16	12
Four	8	11	12	10	14
Five or six	7	10	10	16	9
Seven or more	10	12	11	30	22
(Unsure)	2	0	0	0	0

* Includes households owning the following firearms mentioned by respondents on a voluntary (unaided) basis - air guns, assault weapon, muzzle loader, starter pistol, bow/crossbow, tranquilizer gun and target gun.

FIREARMS OWNERSHIP IN CANADA



Among the three main firearm ownership segments - households which own a rifle, those which have a shotgun, and those which possess a handgun - the survey results show that multiple firearm ownership is most common among households which own a handgun. While an estimated 17 percent (or approximately 1 in 5) of all firearm-owning households in Canada own five or more firearms, this is characteristic of almost one-half (46%) of households which own a handgun. In contrast, it is estimated that only around two in ten of those households which own a rifle (22%) and those possessing a shotgun (21%) have at least five firearms. *(Note: The "type of firearm-owning household" owned categories are not mutually exclusive; that is, households in the "Rifle" segment, for example, own a rifle but they may also own other types of firearms.)*

Canadians participating in this survey were asked whether they themselves own or hold any guns in their possession. A majority (54%) of all survey respondents replied affirmatively. Regionally, personal ownership of a gun was highest among those polled in the Yukon/NWT (65%) and in Manitoba-Saskatchewan (63%) and lowest among respondents living in Quebec (49%). With respect to other demographic descriptors, personal gun ownership was highest among males (82% versus only 18% of women), the middle-aged (60%), those interviewed from households where total annual income is in excess of \$60,000 (66%) and individuals who have less than a complete high school education (59%).

(Table 3)

Table 3 Characteristics of Firearm Owners Interviewed

		<u>Personally Own a Gun</u>
		(%)
All Respondents		54
REGION:		
	British Columbia	59
	Alberta	56
	Saskatchewan	64
	Manitoba	61
	Ontario	54
	Quebec	49
	Atlantic	53
	Yukon\NWT	65
SEX:		
	Male	82
	Female	18
AGE:		
	18 to 34	46
	35 to 54	60
	55+	58
INCOME:		
	Under \$30,000	54
	\$30,000 to \$59,999	54
	\$60,000 and over	66
EDUCATION:		
	Less than High School	59
	Complete High School	52
	Some Post-Secondary	53
	Complete University	55

3.0 OWNERSHIP OF FIREARMS BY TYPE

3.1 Types of Firearms Owned

Rifles and shotguns greatly outnumber other types of firearms owned by Canadians. It is estimated that fully seven in ten (71%) households which own at least one firearm, or approximately 1.5 million Canadian households, have a rifle within their possession. Not far behind are shotguns - an estimated two-thirds (64%) of households with firearms own this type of firearm, or roughly 1.4 million households. Considerably less common are handguns (owned by an estimated 12% of firearm-owning households). Other types of firearms are owned by 5 percent of Canadian households with firearms (of this figure, the voluntary response of "air gun" accounts for 4%). (TABLE 4)

Firearm ownership by type exhibits some marked variations along regional lines. With regard to rifles, the survey results indicate that this type of firearm is owned by nearly all firearm households in Yukon/NWT (95%) and a large majority of those from other regions except Quebec, where this figure drops to 55 percent. On the other hand, Quebec households with firearms are the most likely to own a shotgun (77%); shotgun ownership is least pronounced in the two western-most provinces - British Columbia (51%) and Alberta (58%). According to the research data, handguns are most readily found among firearm-owning households in British Columbia (16%) and Ontario (15%).

Table 4 Ownership by Type of Firearm

	REGION									
	Canada		B.C.	Alb.	Sask.	Man.	Ont.	Que	Atl.	Yuk./ NWT
(BASE = Firearms House- holds in 1000's)	(2220)		(291)	(335)	(125)	(97)	(529)	(577)	(251)	(16)
	(#)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Rifle	1566	71	81	85	87	64	69	55	70	95
Shotgun	1426	64	51	58	61	67	60	77	66	70
Handgun	256	12	16	11	13	12	15	7	8	10
Other*	121	5	8	6	7	4	6	3	2	10

* Includes households owning the following firearms mentioned by respondents on a voluntary (unaided) basis - air guns, assault weapon, muzzle loader, starter pistol, bow/crossbow, tranquilizer gun and target gun.

Additional cross-tabulation analysis of the types of firearms owned reveals that, of the three most prevalent types of firearms, households in which there is a handgun are more likely than those which own a rifle and those which possess a shotgun, to also own another type of firearm. More specifically, among Canadian households which own a handgun, the survey results suggest that approximately three in four (73%) also possess a rifle and around two-thirds (63%) also own a shotgun. Among shotgun-owning households, meanwhile, two-thirds (65%) also own a rifle but only one in ten have a handgun. Rifle-owning households are even less likely to have other types of firearms - six in ten (59%) also own a shotgun and one in ten a handgun. (TABLE 5)

Table 5 Ownership by Type of Firearm - By Type of Household

	TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD					
	Canada		Rifle Owing	Shotgun Owing	Handgun Owing	Other* Firearm Owing
(BASE = Firearms Households in 1000's)	(2220) (#)	(%)	(1566) (%)	(1426) (%)	(256) (%)	(117) (%)
Rifle	1566	71	100	65	73	51
Shotgun	1426	64	59	100	63	44
Handgun	256	12	12	11	100	16
Other*	121	5	3	3	7	100

* Includes households owning the following firearms mentioned by respondents on a voluntary (unaided) basis - air guns, assault weapon, muzzle loader, starter pistol, bow/crossbow, tranquilizer gun and target gun.

Ownership of other types of firearms is also fairly common among the smaller sectors of firearm households. Among households which own an air gun (term volunteered by respondents), half also have in their possession a rifle, four in ten (43%) own a shotgun and one in ten possess a handgun. (These results are included in the "Other" firearms owned category.)

3.2 Incidence of Semi-Automatic Firearms

Of the three most popular types of firearms owned by Canadian households, those most likely to be semi-automatic are handguns, followed by rifles and shotguns. The results of this survey show that slightly more than one-third (36%) of households which own a handgun have at least one which is semi-automatic. This compares to one-quarter (24%) of rifle-owning households which have at least one semi-automatic rifle and to even fewer (17%) households with shotguns. (TABLE 6)

Household ownership of semi-automatic handguns varies across different population descriptors. Regionally, the proportion of handgun households with at least one semi-automatic handgun is in the 30 to 40 percent range in all parts of Canada except Yukon/NWT, where it climbs to the 50 percent mark. Handgun-owning households which have used any of their firearms on at least one occasion over the past year are almost twice as likely as those which have not, to own a semi-automatic handgun (42% versus 23%). (TABLES 6 & 7) (See Section 5.0 for an explanation of how a household's main reason for owning a selected type of firearm was determined in the survey.)

Table 6 Incidence of Semi-Automatic Firearm Ownership - By Region

	REGION								
	Canada	B.C.	Alb.	Sask.	Man.	Ont.	Que.	Atl.	Yuk./ NWT
(BASE = Handgun Households in 1000's)	(256) (%)	(45) (%)	(36) (%)	(16) (%)	(12) (%)	(81) (%)	(43) (%)	(21) (%)	(2) (%)
Hand gun	36*	40	36	44	23	36	30	33	50
(BASE = Rifle Households in 1000's)	(1566) (%)	(235) (%)	(286) (%)	(108) (%)	(62) (%)	(364) (%)	(318) (%)	(177) (%)	(15) (%)
Rifle	24	22	22	38	30	23	21	24	32
(BASE = Shotgun Households in 1000's)	(1426) (%)	(150) (%)	(194) (%)	(77) (%)	(65) (%)	(319) (%)	(444) (%)	(166) (%)	(11) (%)
Shotgun	17	18	14	11	11	21	20	13	14

* Read as: 36 percent of households owning a handgun report at least one handgun is semi-automatic.

Household ownership of semi-automatic rifles is also variable across population sub-groupings. Across geographic lines, the proportion of rifle-owning households with at least one rifle of the semi-automatic variety is roughly one out of every four in most regions but rises to one-third in both Manitoba/Saskatchewan and Yukon/NWT. Similar to that observed for handgun-owning households, the incidence of semi-automatic rifle ownership is higher among rifle owning households which have used a firearm in the past 12 months than among those which have not (28% compared to 19%).

**Table 7 Incidence of Semi-automatic Firearm Ownership
- by Firearm Usage in Past Year**

	Canada	Used a Firearm in Past Year	
		Yes	No
(BASE = Handgun Households in 1000's)	(256) (%)	(164) (%)	(89) (%)
Handgun	36*	42**	23
(BASE = Rifle Households in 1000's)	(1566) (%)	(849) (%)	(705) (%)
Rifle	24	28	19
(BASE = Shotgun Households in 1000's)	(1426) (%)	(810) (%)	(609) (%)
Shotgun	17	19	15

- * Read as: 36 percent of households owning a handgun have at least one which is semi-automatic.
 ** Read as: 42 percent of handgun-owning households where at least one firearm was used within the past year, have at least one semi-automatic handgun.

Differences tend to be less pronounced across population segments concerning the incidence of semi-automatic shotgun ownership. Based on the results emerging from the surveyed sample of Canadians, the proportion of households with shotguns which own at least one semi-automatic firearm of this type ranges from only one in ten in Manitoba/Saskatchewan to double this number in Ontario (21%) and Quebec (20%). Whether or not these households have used a firearm during the past year appears to have no marked association with the incidence of semi-automatic shotguns.

4.0 PROFILE OF FIREARM OWNERS

4.1 Demographic Profile

This section of the report presents a socio-demographic profile of firearm owners in Canada. As respondents to this survey were not necessarily required to personally own a firearm (that is, they were allowed to answer questions on behalf of their entire household), the following profile is based solely on survey participants who indicated that they themselves are the owner of a firearm, thus painting a portrait of firearm owners in this country. These estimates are then compared to the Canadian population at large based on estimates obtained from the Census and from recent National Angus Reid Polls.

- o Sex - The survey results show that firearm owners in Canada are predominantly male (86%) as opposed to the gender split that exists among the Canadian population as a whole. (TABLE 8)

Table 8 Profile of Firearm Owners Compared to Canadian Population Overall

	Firearms Owners	Canadian Population*
(BASE = Firearm Owners Interviewed in 1000's)	(1206)	
	(%)	(%)
SEX:		
Male	86	49
Female	14	51
AGE:		
18 to 34	31	38
35 to 54	46	35
55+	22	27
EDUCATION:		
Less than High School	26	22
High School	29	25
Some Post-Secondary	28	30
Complete University	15	23
(Not Stated)	2	
INCOME:		
Under \$20,000	11	17
\$20,000 \$39,999	32	33
\$40,000 \$59,999	25	24
\$60,000+	20	19
(Not Stated)	10	7
EMPLOYMENT STATUS:		
Full-time	66	47
Part-time	6	12
Unemployed	5	7
Retired	14	17
At home	3	7
Student	3	9
OCCUPATION AMONG THOSE EMPLOYED	(867)	
	(%)	
Owner	13	15
Professional	18	34
Clerical	8	10
Sales/Service	18	23
Blue Collar	33	14
Farming	8	3

* Based on Census data and data from National Angus Reid Polls.

- o **Age** - Firearm owners are more likely to be middle-aged compared to Canadians as a whole. Based on this survey, a large plurality (46%) of Canadians who personally own a firearm are between 35 and 54 years of age, whereas this age group comprises about one-third of the national population. The younger (18 to 34) and older (55+) age groupings represent a larger portion of the Canadian population overall compared to firearm owners.
- o **Education** - Owners of firearms tend to have less formal education than the population overall. This research indicated that, whereas a majority (55%) of firearm owners have not received formal schooling beyond the high school level, more than half (53%) of Canadians have at least some post-secondary education.
- o **Income** - There are no significant socio-economic differences between firearm owners and the population of the country in general, except perhaps for somewhat of an under-representation of firearm owners in the lowest income category (less than \$20,000), as suggested by this survey.
- o **Employment Status** - Full-time employment is more characteristic of Canadians who personally own a firearm than members of the overall population. While fully two-thirds (66%) of firearm owners in the survey said they are working at full-time jobs,

this applies to just under half (47%) of Canadians as a whole, who are twice as likely to be employed on a part-time basis (12%).

- o **Occupation** - Consistent with their lower levels of education compared to Canadians overall, firearm owners are not as likely to be employed in white collar occupations. Based on the sample of surveyed respondents, roughly one-third (31%) of employed Canadians who personally own a firearm work in an owner or professional capacity, as opposed to one-half of Canadians as a whole - this gap is particularly evident with regard to professional occupations (18% of firearm owners versus 34% of Canadians overall). Meanwhile, polled firearm owners were considerably more likely to be blue collar workers (33% versus 14% of the general population) and, to a lesser extent, involved in farming (8% compared to 3%).

4.2 Incidence of Firearm Safety Instruction

The results emerging from this survey show that among all Canadian households which own a firearm, one-half (49%) have a member who has received instruction in the care and safe handling of firearms within the past five years. Across regional lines, the incidence of firearm safety instruction ranges from a low of 43 percent in British Columbia, to a narrow majority (53%) of Ontario households which own a firearm, up to 60 percent in

Yukon/NWT, the part of the country which has the highest prevalence of firearm ownership as well as the highest estimated average number of firearms per household. (TABLE 9)

There are also wide variations in firearm safety instruction with respect to other population descriptors. The incidence of having received training in the care and safe handling of firearms is significantly greater among households which own a handgun (67%) than among those which possess a rifle or a shotgun (levels comparable to the national picture).

With respect to households' main reason for owning a firearm, the incidence rate is only 38 percent among those households whose primary reason is collecting but rises to the majority mark or higher among all other household types, notably those whose predominant reason is employment (75%). While most (60%) firearm-owning households which have used their firearm within the past year have at least one member who has received safety instruction, the same can be said of only a minority (37%) of those households which have not used their firearm in this period of time. Finally, the survey results suggest that there tends to be a positive association between the incidence of firearm safety instruction and the number of firearms owned by households (from 43% among those with only one firearm, up to around 60% of households with five or more firearms).

Table 9 Incidence of Household Firearm Safety Instruction

		Firearm-Owning Households in Which Member Has Received Safety Instructions in the Past Five Year
		(%)
REGION:		49
	Canada	43
	British Columbia	46
	Alberta	47
	Saskatchewan	48
	Manitoba	53
	Ontario	48
	Quebec	48
	Atlantic	60
	Yukon\NWT	
TYPE OF FIREARM:		48
	Rifle	52
	Shotgun	67
	Handgun	55
	Other*	
REASON FOR OWNERSHIP:		60
	Target	50
	Hunting	38
	Collecting	75
	Employment	52
	Self-protection**	
USED IN PAST YEAR:		
	Yes	60
	No	37
NUMBER OF FIREARMS OWNED:		
	One	43
	Two	45
	Three	52
	Four	53
	Five	63
	Six	63
	Seven or more	60

* Includes the following firearms mentioned by respondents on a voluntary (unaided) basis - air guns, assault weapon, muzzle loader, starter pistol, bow/crossbow, tranquilizer gun and target gun.

** Volunteered by respondents as their household's main reason for owning this type of firearm; it was not read to respondents as were target shooting, hunting, collecting and employment.

5.0 REASONS FOR FIREARM OWNERSHIP

5.1 Rifles

Survey respondents who indicated that they or some other member of their household owns a rifle, shotgun, handgun, or some other type of firearm (term volunteered), were subsequently asked what their household's main reason is for owning each type of firearm. These respondents were asked whether their household's main reason for ownership is target shooting, hunting, collecting or employment, or some other reason volunteered by the respondents; only one main reason was accepted for each type of firearm owned by the respondent's household.

Hunting is the predominant reason why Canadians own rifles. Fully two-thirds (68%) of surveyed Canadian households which own a rifle do so for hunting purposes. This reason is trailed distantly by target shooting and collecting (14% each). A negligible portion of rifle-owning households own this type of firearm for reasons of employment or self-protection (term volunteered).

Table 10 Main Reason for Owning Firearm - By Region

	REGION								
	Canada	B.C.	Alb.	Sask.	Man.	Ont.	Que	Atl.	Yuk./ NWT
(BASE = Rifle Households in 1000's)	(1566) (%)	(235) (%)	(286) (%)	(108) (%)	(62) (%)	(364) (%)	(318) (%)	(177) (%)	(15) (%)
RIFLE:									
Hunting	68	59	60	71	73	66	76	79	74
Target Shooting	14	15	19	18	11	13	11	7	21
Collecting	14	22	17	6	13	17	10	9	0
Employment	1	1	-	3	3	1	1	0	0
Self-protection*	1	2	1	1	0	2	1	0	0
(BASE = Shotgun Households in 1000's)	(1426) (%)	(150) (%)	(194) (%)	(77) (%)	(65) (%)	(319) (%)	(444) (%)	(166) (%)	(11) (%)
SHOTGUN:									
Hunting	78	63	70	80	75	74	88	81	86
Collecting	11	20	13	8	10	13	7	10	0
Target shooting	8	9	13	8	8	10	3	6	7
Employment	1	1	-	2	3	2	-	0	0
Self-protection*	1	3	-	0	0	0	1	-	0
(BASE = Handgun Households in 1000's)	(256) (%)	(45) (%)	(36) (%)	(16) (%)	(12) (%)	(81) (%)	(43) (%)	(21) (%)	(2) (%)
HANDGUN:									
Target shooting	41	51	51	50	15	39	25	50	50
Collecting	32	37	33	44	38	33	20	26	50
Employment	15	7	8	6	31	16	30	8	0
Self-protection*	5	5	8	0	8	1	14	4	0
Hunting	5	0	0	0	8	8	9	4	0

* Volunteered by respondents as main reason.

A large majority of the rifle-owning households interviewed in all parts of the country own this type of firearm for hunting purposes. Nevertheless, this figure does show regional variation, from six in ten households in British Columbia and Alberta to fully three-quarters in Quebec, the Atlantic provinces and Yukon/NWT. As a main reason for rifle ownership, target shooting is the most common among rifle-owning households in Yukon/NWT (21%) and Alberta (19%). Compared to other regions, owning a rifle for collecting purposes is most likely to be indicated by households in British Columbia (22%), followed by those in Alberta and Ontario (17% each). (TABLE 10)

Further analysis shows that rifle-owning households interviewed which also have a handgun reported somewhat different reasons for owning a rifle than those households which do not also own a handgun. In particular, these households are somewhat less likely to own their rifle for hunting (only 59% reported this reason), and somewhat more likely to cite target shooting (16%) or collecting (20%) as the main reason. Similarly, rifle-owning households which also own a shotgun are somewhat more likely to report hunting (76%) as the main reason for having a rifle, and somewhat less likely to cite either target shooting (10%) or collecting (11%). (TABLE 11)

Table 11 Main Reason for Owning Firarm - By Type of Household

	Canada	TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD		
		Rifle Owing	Shotgun Owing	Handgun Owing
(BASE = Rifle Households in 1000's)	(1566) (%)	(1566) (%)	(927) (%)	(188) (%)
RIFLE:				
Hunting	68	68	76	59
Target shooting	14	14	10	16
Collecting	14	14	11	20
Employment	1	1	1	1
Self-protection*	1	1	1	2
(BASE = Shotgun Households in 1000's)	(1426) (%)	(927) (%)	(1426) (%)	(162) (%)
SHOTGUN:				
Hunting	78	79	78	67
Collecting	11	10	11	16
Target shooting	8	8	8	13
Employment	1	1	1	4
Self-protection*	1	-	1	0
(BASE = Handgun Households in 1000's)	(256) (%)	(188) (%)	(162) (%)	(256) (%)
HANDGUN:				
Target shooting	41	43	42	41
Collecting	32	35	35	32
Employment	15	10	10	15
Self-protection*	5	6	7	5
Hunting	5	5	6	5

* Volunteered by respondents as main reason.

5.2 Shotguns

Hunting is an even more pervasive reason for owning a shotgun than a rifle. More than three-quarters (78%) of surveyed Canadian households which own a shotgun said their primary reason for ownership is hunting. Other reasons account for only a small minority of households which own a shotgun, the main ones being collecting (11%) and target shooting (8%). As was observed for rifles, virtually no shotgun-owning households cite employment or self-protection (volunteered by respondents) as their primary reason for ownership of a shotgun.

Throughout the country, hunting is by far the main reason why households own shotguns. Regional patterns which were noted for rifle ownership are, similarly, observed with respect to shotguns: namely, shotgun-owning households in British Columbia and Alberta are the least inclined to own a shotgun for hunting purposes (63% and 70% respectively, which is still very large) while those in Quebec (88%), Atlantic Canada (81%) and Yukon/NWT (86%) are the most likely to do so. British Columbians are again the most likely to own a shotgun for collecting (20%), and target shooting is mentioned more often by Alberta households (13%).

Shotgun-owning households which also own a handgun are somewhat more likely to report collecting (16%) or target shooting (13%) as the main reason for owning their shotgun and somewhat less likely to cite hunting (67%).

5.3 Handguns

Handguns, meanwhile, largely tend to be owned for target shooting and collecting purposes. A plurality of interviewed households which own a handgun cite target shooting (41%) as their main reason for ownership, followed by collecting (32%). A significant number (15%) also do so for employment purposes. Self-protection (volunteered by respondents) and hunting are each pinpointed as foremost reasons by only one in twenty (5%) households which own a handgun.

Reasons for handgun ownership are not uniform across the country. Target shooting is the primary reason for owning a handgun among half of all such households in British Columbia, Alberta and the Atlantic provinces. In Manitoba-Saskatchewan and Ontario, handgun-owning households are roughly divided between target shooting and collecting, with an even split between these two reasons in Yukon/NWT. Reasons for owning a handgun are divided further still among Quebec households with handguns: one-quarter own this firearm mainly for target shooting, one in five (20%) for collecting, and three in ten (30%) for employment purposes (considerably higher than households elsewhere in Canada); households from this province are also the most likely to own handguns for the respondent-volunteered reason of self-protection (14%).

6.0 FIREARM USAGE

6.1 Use of Firearms Over the Past Year

The data collected in this survey suggest that Canadian households which own a firearm are evenly divided between those which have used any of their firearms over the past year and those which have not. One-half of all firearm households in this country have used at least one of their firearms over the course of the last 12 months. A generally comparable figure can be found in most parts of Canada. The two exceptions are British Columbia households (only 38%) and, positioned at the other end of the continuum, households in Yukon/NWT (65%). (TABLE 12)

Table 12 Firearm Usage Over the Past Year

		Firearm-Owning Households Using a Firearm Over the Past Year
		(%)
REGION:		
	Canada	50
	British Columbia	38
	Alberta	47
	Saskatchewan	58
	Manitoba	52
	Ontario	51
	Quebec	51
	Atlantic	55
	Yukon\NWT	65
TYPE OF FIREARM:		
	Rifle	54
	Shotgun	57
	Handgun	64
	Other*	47
REASON FOR OWNERSHIP:		
	Target shooting	53
	Hunting	58
	Collecting	24
	Employment	66
	Self-protection**	51
NUMBER OF FIREARMS OWNED:		
	One	32
	Two	50
	Three	56
	Four	71
	Five	79
	Six	81
	Seven or more	64

* Includes the following firearms mentioned by respondents on a voluntary (unaided) basis - air guns, assault weapon, muzzle loader, starter pistol, bow\crossbow, tranquilizer gun and target gun.

** Volunteered by respondents as main reason.

APPENDIX I

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Survey Content and Comparisons with Other Sources

The questionnaire for this survey was developed in close consultation with representatives from the Department of Justice. The final draft questionnaire was subject to pretesting and revision in order to ensure that the question wording was clear and accurate, and that the interviews flowed smoothly. A copy of the final questionnaire employed in this study is appended to this report.

The focus of this study was on household ownership of firearms in Canada, the main reason for owning different types of firearms, and household usage of firearms during the last 12 months. The results also provide estimates of the total stock of firearms held in private households at this time.

A survey conducted by Statistics Canada in August, 1976 estimated that a total of 5,168,000 firearms were held by private households in Canada. Estimates from the present survey suggest that this number has now grown by about fifteen percent to 5,926,000 firearms. Estimates of the number of households which own firearms are not available from the Statistics Canada study, so that other data from the two studies are not directly comparable.

Sampling Method and Precision of Estimates

The survey population for this study is all Canadian households with a working telephone on the premises. Since the telephone numbers called in this study were generated at random, all such households had a chance of being selected, whether or not their telephone number was listed or unlisted in telephone company directories. Telephone numbers for the sample were randomly generated using the Angus Reid Group's in-house computerized sample selection procedure. This program generates telephone numbers randomly by Census Division, such that the sample is selected proportionate to population distributions consistent with Census data.

All data reported in the research findings have been weighted to reflect the actual proportions of households in Canada by province and territory. The results, therefore, are taken to be representative of the Canadian population as a whole, both nationally and regionally.

In the survey, a total of 2341 households were interviewed where there was at least one firearm owned by the household. With respect to the profile of firearms owned and other measures in this survey, estimates of proportions based on a random sample of this size are accurate to within ± 2.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

The portrait of firearm owners is based upon the 1271 respondents in this survey who personally owned a firearm. The survey results concerning firearm owners are taken to be accurate to within ± 2.75 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

The prevalence of firearm ownership is estimated to be 23 percent of Canadian households. Moreover, since this estimate of firearm ownership prevalence is based upon 10,103 households, this estimate is expected to be accurate to within ± 1 percentage point at the 95 percent confidence level.

With respect to all other estimates of proportions (ie. "percentages") reported in this study, a more precise estimate of statistical precision may be obtained by consulting appropriate tables of statistical significance. In general, these latter estimates of precision often indicate that the results are more precise, since the above generalisations assume a "worst case" estimate.

The accuracy of survey estimates in general may be affected by various sources of "non-sampling error", the effects of which are typically inestimable. Such sources include the differences which may have resulted from reporting errors and from non-response, for example. Similarly, the present study may be subject to inaccuracies due to non-sampling error. However, there is no evidence in the present study to suggest that the estimates produced by this survey are subject to any more inaccuracies nor any less inaccuracies than any other similar telephone survey of the Canadian population.

APPENDIX II
QUESTIONNAIRE

Proofed: _____ Precoded: _____ Checked: _____

START TIME: _____ STOP TIME: _____ TOTAL TIME: _____

FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE
- FIREARMS SURVEY -
(4-745-03)

- British Columbia.....01
- Alberta.....02
- Saskatchewan.....03
- Manitoba.....04
- Ontario.....05
- Quebec.....06
- New Brunswick.....07
- Nova Scotia.....08
- Newfoundland.....09
- Prince Edward Island...10
- Yukon/NWT.....11

CITY OR CD: _____
(FIELD USE ONLY)

Hello, this is _____ calling from the Angus Reid Group. We're a professional public opinion research company. Today we are talking to a random sample of Canadians about a number of issues in the news. I want to assure you that all of your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

Are you 18 years of age or older?

- Yes - (CONTINUE)
- No - May I speak with someone who is? (REPEAT INTRODUCTION)

SEX: DO NOT ASK:

- Male.....1
- Female....2

1. To begin, I would like to know if anyone in your household owns any of the following consumer goods (READ LIST - DO NOT ROTATE) a recreation vehicle, fishing equipment, skiing equipment, any type of gun or firearm, a pleasure boat?

- A. A Recreational vehicle.....1 ...29
- B. Fishing Equipment.....1 ...29
- C. Skiing Equipment.....1 ...29
- D. Any type of gun or firearm - Yes.....1 - CONTINUE

NO -- TALLY AND THANK																													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

(DON'T KNOW) -- TALLY AND THANK																													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

(REFUSED) -- TALLY AND THANK																													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

E A pleasure boat.....1 ...29

IF "ANY TYPE OF GUN OR FIREARM" MENTIONED, CONTINUE.
IF "ANY TYPE OF GUN OR FIREARM" NOT MENTIONED, THANK AND TERMINATE INTERVIEW.

2. First, thinking specifically about the guns or firearms owned by your household, have any been used at anytime during the last 12 months?

Yes.....1
 No.....2
 (Don't Know).....8
 (Not Stated/Refused).....9

3. Do you yourself own or hold any guns in your possession?

Yes.....1
 No.....2
 (Don't Know).....8
 (Not Stated/Refused).....9

4. And, which of the following types of guns or firearms is owned or held by any member of your household? (READ LIST - PROBE FOR EACH TYPE OF GUN - ACCEPT ALL VALID RESPONSES. IF RESPONDENT UNSURE OF TYPE OF FIREARM, READ DEFINITIONS LISTED BELOW).

	Q.4		Q.5	Q.6 MAIN REASON				(DK/ NS)	Other Specify
	Yes	No		Target Shooting	Hunting	Collecting	Employment		
a) Shotgun.....	1	2	9	.....1	.....1	.....1	.....1	.....9	.....
b) Rifle.....	1	2	9	.....1	.....1	.....1	.....1	.....9	.....
c) Handgun.....	1	2	9	.....1	.....1	.....1	.....1	.....9	.....
d) Other (SPECIFY)	.....	.....	.....	.....1	.....1	.....1	.....1	.....9	.....

RIFLE: Fired from the shoulder, and has rifling or grooves inside the barrel.

SHOTGUN: Fired from the shoulder, has no rifling or grooves in the barrel, and uses shotshells that contain many pellets.

HANDGUN: Any firearm designed to be held and fired with one hand.

FOR EACH TYPE MENTIONED IN Q4 ASK:

5. And how many (READ ITEM) does your household own? (RECORD ABOVE)

FOR EACH TYPE MENTIONED IN Q4 ASK:

6. And what is the main reason your household owns a _____, is it for target shooting, hunting, collecting, employment or for some other reason? (ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE - CIRCLE ABOVE)

FOR EACH TYPE MENTIONED IN Q.4 ASK:

7. Are any of these _____ semi-automatic? (READ DEFINITION IF NECESSARY: A semi-automatic firearm fires only one bullet with each squeeze of the trigger, but reloads itself for the next shot automatically).

	Yes	No	(DK)	Refused	(NS)
a) Shotgun.....	1	2	7	8	9
b) Rifle.....	1	2	7	8	9
c) Handgun.....	1	2	7	8	9
d) Other (SPECIFY)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

8. Have any of the members of your household who use the guns or firearms you own been instructed in the care and safe handling of firearms in the past five years?

- Yes.....1
- No.....2
- (Don't Know).....8
- (Not Stated/Refused)....9

I just have a few questions that will be used for statistical purposes only.

9. Which of the following categories does your age fall into?

- 18 to 24 years.....1
- 25 to 34 years.....2
- 35 to 44 years.....3
- 45 to 54 years.....4
- 55 to 64 years.....5
- 65 years or older.....6
- (Refused/Not Stated)....9

10. And, what is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

- Grade school or some high school.....1
- Complete high school.....2
- Technical, post-secondary.....3
- Some University.....4
- Complete University Degree.....5
- Post Graduate Degree.....6
- (Don't Know/Not Stated).....9

11. Are you currently (READ LIST)?

- Employed full-time for pay.....1
- Employed part-time for pay.....2 } (CONTINUE)
- Unemployed but seeking employment....3
- A full-time student.....4
- At home.....5 } (SKIP TO Q.13)
- Retired.....6
- Other.....7

12. In at least two words, could you please describe your present occupation?

13. Which of the following categories best describes your annual household income? That is, the total income, before taxes, of all persons in your household?

- Under \$10,000.....1
- \$10,000 to \$19,999.....2
- \$20,000 to \$29,999.....3
- \$30,000 to \$39,999.....4
- \$40,000 to \$49,999.....5
- \$50,000 to \$59,999.....6
- \$60,000 to \$69,999.....7
- \$70,000 and over.....8
- (Refused/Not Stated)....9

This survey was conducted by the Angus Reid Group on behalf of the federal Department of Justice.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

