

2002

THE
REGISTRAR OF FIREARMS' REPORT

TO THE

SOLICITOR
GENERAL
OF CANADA

The REGISTRAR of FIREARMS'
REPORT TO THE
SOLICITOR GENERAL of CANADA
on the ADMINISTRATION of the
FIREARMS ACT

A National Police Service of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

ON THE
ADMINISTRATION

OF THE
ACT
FIREARMS



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Foreword

This report covers the period from January 1 to December 31, 2002.

In 2002, the position of Registrar of Firearms reported to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). In accordance with legislative amendments to the *Firearms Act* (Bill C-10A) and the Government's commitment to streamline the Canadian Firearms Program, the position of Registrar of Firearms and the Canadian Firearms Registry were transferred from the RCMP to the Canada Firearms Centre on August 1, 2003.¹

The *Firearms Act* stipulated that the Registrar of Firearms must submit an annual report to the Solicitor General of Canada on the administration of the *Firearms Act*. Amendments to the Act changed this provision. As of April 2003, the Commissioner of Firearms, Canada Firearms Centre, will be responsible for tabling an annual activity and performance report to Parliament. This report, therefore, is the last report to be submitted by the Registrar of Firearms.

Contributors and Sources of Information

This report presents the various activities undertaken by the Canadian Firearms Program in 2002 and describes the status of the Program's activities at the end of 2002 in narrative form with supporting figures, charts and tables.

To assist the reader, background information on the Canadian Firearms Program and descriptions of subject matter covered in the report are provided in Annexes A to H.

Information in the report was provided by various representatives of the Canada Firearms Centre, the Canadian Firearms Registry and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Unless otherwise indicated in the body of the report, all statistical data was collected from the Canadian Firearms Registration System, the Restricted Weapon Registration System and the Canadian Police Information Centre system. Information on population in Canada was obtained from Statistics Canada reports.

¹ In the summer of 2003, the name of the Canadian Firearms Centre was changed to the Canada Firearms Centre.

I. Introduction

The *Firearms Act* and Regulations apply to any person (including visitors to Canada) and any businesses that own, want to acquire or use firearms.² Public safety is the founding principle upon which the *Firearms Act* and the Canadian Firearms Program were created. The Program has maintained this principle since its inception. Public safety continues to be the primary guiding principle that shapes decision-making and the development and implementation of objectives.

The year 2002 was one of tremendous growth and numerous challenges for the Canadian Firearms Program. The Program completed the final year of the four-year registration phase, committee hearings for proposed legislative amendments to the *Firearms Act* were underway, demands from firearm registrants peaked, and major organizational and operational changes were well in progress. Amidst these activities and challenges, the Program endeavoured to maintain client service to the firearms community.

In 2002, Program resources directed their efforts in four major areas of activity:

1. *Adapting to Meet Evolving Demands.* In 2002, the Canada Firearms Centre and its partners focused their efforts on how they could work more effectively by simplifying and streamlining their processes and organizational structure.
2. *Completing the Registration Phase.* With the December 31, 2002 deadline for the registration of firearms, the Program sought ways to help firearm owners and to relieve administrative burdens.
3. *Maintaining Services to the Firearms Community.* The Program has cultivated a close working relationship with the firearms community.³ In 2002, the Canada Firearms Centre sought to maintain and further enhance its services and communications links with these communities.
4. *Preparing for Transition.* The Program directed its attention to re-engineering its business lines and developing a new service delivery model as it prepared to shift from the initial licensing and registration phases to an on-going program management environment.

As key administrators of the Program,⁴ the Registrar of Firearms (the Registrar) and the Chief Firearms Officers each had specific objectives to meet in 2002 in concert with Program objectives.

The Registrar was tasked with the following objectives:

- a) Streamline processes and resources in order to complete the registration phase prior to the December 31, 2002 deadline;
- b) Develop and implement outreach initiatives that would help firearm owners understand their legal obligations and how they could comply with the law. Various means included bulletins and articles, and mail outs of application forms and information letters; and

² The Department of National Defence is exempt from firearm licensing and registration. Public agencies are not required to record their firearms until 2004.

³ The firearms community is comprised of individuals, businesses, museums, public agencies and national and international policing agencies.

⁴ See Annex B for more information on key administrators of the Program.

Introduction

- c) Reorganize and restructure the Canadian Firearms Registry in preparation for operational transition. This included conducting an analysis of the organizational requirements, preparing job descriptions and initiating staffing processes.

The Chief Firearms Officers focused on the following priorities:

- a) Continue to foster established relationships with police agencies pertaining to entries to the Firearms Interest Police (FIP) system and improve or enhance information sharing with police agencies for applicant investigations and client events;
- b) Continue to assist firearm owners and users with safety training, licensing and registration applications;
- c) Complete investigations related to the licence applications received;
- d) Continue to reduce operational costs through downsizing and cost-effective client service; and
- e) Realign Chief Firearms Officer operations for British Columbia within the federal Northwest Region.

Throughout the course of the year, the Program faced several significant challenges, namely:

- a) *Delays in passing proposed legislative amendments to the Firearms Act.* The Program had anticipated that legislative amendments to the *Firearms Act* (Bill C10A) would receive Royal Assent in 2002 allowing the Canada Firearms Centre to introduce the legislative streamlining measures proposed in the Bill. Program restructuring plans were placed on hold pending passage of the Bill.
- b) *Staff reductions.* To satisfy financial constraints placed on the Program, major reductions in staff were made and hiring freezes were put into place. Business processes had to be re-engineered and the delivery of operations had to be further streamlined to operate within available resources.
- c) *Work stoppages at the Central Processing Site.* Operations at the Central Processing Site were shutdown on several occasions when packages containing potential health hazards were received. Although mail sorting and opening operations were segregated in another facility, closures compromised the Central Processing Site's ability to handle the growing volume of mail particularly as the registration deadline approached.
- d) *Increased call volumes.* As the December 31, 2002 registration deadline approached, the number of calls to the call centres and e-mails to the communications staff exceeded anticipated volumes and put a tremendous strain on resources.
- e) *Program audit.* In the midst of implementing objectives and addressing operational challenges, the Program's finances and reporting to Parliament were reviewed by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada. Over a period of several months, the Canada Firearms Centre and its partners cooperated in all aspects of the review to assist the Auditor General in the preparation of her report. The Auditor General published her report in December 2002.

II. Adapting to Evolving Demands

The Canada Firearms Centre monitored progress regularly to determine if and when a change to its activities was needed to ensure objectives were met. The ability to manage the increase in workload in all areas was continually assessed in order to react in the best possible manner.

A. Legislative Amendments to the *Firearms Act*

Amendments to the *Criminal Code* and the *Firearms Act* were initially tabled in 2001 in Bill C-15. In 2002, the firearms amendments as well as measures dealing with animal cruelty were re-introduced in Bill C-10. The Bill was split in 2002, with firearms amendments contained in Bill C-10A and measures dealing with animal cruelty included in Bill C-10B.

These legislative amendments would allow the Canadian Firearms Program to be restructured to make its day-to-day administration more efficient and effective with a renewed emphasis on service to firearm owners. Representatives of the policing community, the Minister's User Group on Firearms,⁵ firearms control advocates and the firearms community were consulted on the content of the amendments.

B. Safety Training Review

The Canadian Firearms Safety Course (CFSC) is a mandatory requirement for those who wish to acquire firearms. Comprehensive reviews of this course and of the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course (CRFSC) were conducted in 2002.

As a means of ensuring national continuity in the service and delivery of firearms safety training and awareness, the Canada Firearms Centre established a National Firearms Safety Advisory Board which held its inaugural meeting in October 2002 to discuss, among other things, the future goals and objectives of the Program.

C. System Functionality

The Canada Firearms Centre performed regular reviews and analyses of data that had been collected since December 1998 to ensure their accuracy and integrity. A close examination of data collection practices and a refinement of statistical reporting presentations were begun. Automated tools were put in place to flag anomalies, supplemented by a manual review to analyze and correct information as needed.

On a regular basis, the Canada Firearms Centre assessed the efficacy of the performance of the Canadian Firearms Registration System (CFRS) during peak usage periods, the effectiveness of its interfaces with various systems, and the impact of change on processing operations.

⁵ The Minister's User Group on Firearms was comprised of individuals who represented the interests of both individuals and organizations within the firearms community. The group was appointed by the Minister of Justice. The group's role was to report members' concerns and findings and raise issues concerning the Firearms Program. In June 2003, this group was replaced by the Program Advisory Committee which reports to the Commissioner of Firearms.

While no major functionality changes were made to CFRS in 2002, the following improvements were implemented:

- a) Changes to the automation software allowed the Program to meet or exceed the processing demands for the large number of applications submitted in the latter part of the year; and
- b) System refinements to eligibility processing and firearm status checking enhanced the Program's ability to apply public safety standards.

These changes improved system workflows, reduced the need for manual intervention and increased data quality and integrity.

At the end of December 2002, firearm registrants accessed the Canada Firearms Centre's Website with extreme frequency. The excessive demand, overloaded the system causing interruptions for brief periods of time. Although applicants were not able to upload their registration application information during these interruptions, system security and data integrity remained intact.

D. Business Practices

In 2002, the Program continually reviewed its business practices to promote efficiencies in business processes and improve service to the firearms community.

- a) Workflow at the Central Processing Site was shifted to make optimum use of resources and expedite document processing. This decreased the backlog in high volume areas;
- b) Transfer duties performed by the Canadian Firearms Registry and Central Processing Site staff were amalgamated as a means of optimizing resources. This provided a more effective means of completing transfer transactions, making service to firearm owners more efficient;
- c) A joint Canadian Firearms Registry–Central Processing Site working committee was formed to improve the lines of communication, enhance the use of shared resources, increase process flows, streamline business practices, and effectively manage the high volumes of registration applications submitted to the Program;
- d) Chief Firearms Officers in some jurisdictions became involved in supporting the verifier's network. This allowed the Program to reduce resource requirements and make use of the expertise provided by the Chief Firearms Officers' infrastructures; and
- e) Responsibility for the accreditation process was realigned to allow for a more centralized screening approach. This change in process increased efficiencies and reduced the workload of the Chief Firearms Officers.

III. Completing the Registration Phase

The *Firearms Act* stipulates that firearm owners had to have obtained a registration certificate for their firearms by January 1, 2003. In spite of communication initiatives and early registration incentives, many firearm owners waited until the last days before the December 31, 2002 deadline to forward their registration applications. The heavy influx of applications received towards the end of the year made it impossible to process and screen all applications before the deadline.

A. Facilitating Compliance

The Canada Firearms Centre continued to be committed to making the firearm registration process more convenient and user friendly. Firearm owners were offered assistance and various options to help them apply to register their firearms.

1. On-line Registration Application

An Internet registration application made it simpler and easier for owners to apply to register their firearms. Offering this service free of charge made it more appealing to registrants. Costs were reduced by eliminating the need to print, stock and mail paper application forms, receive and respond to phone calls requesting application forms, open and sort mail, manually data capture information and contact applicants to obtain information missing from their applications. Safeguards were in place to protect privacy and assure the security of registration information provided over the Internet.

2. Direct Mailing Registration Applications

Following the success of the mail outs in 2001 to other regions in Canada, licensed firearm owners in Alberta and British Columbia were mailed personalized registration application forms in January 2002. Applicants were offered free registration for a defined time period. All those who had already previously paid a fee to register their firearms were mailed a refund.

Once the free time period had ended, subsequent mail outs of personalized registration application forms to targeted licensed firearm owners followed in June, July and October. Accompanying letters explained compliance requirements and the deadline for registering. While the on-line service remained free, there was an \$18 processing fee for these mailed registration applications. The \$18 flat fee applied no matter how many non-restricted firearms were listed on the application form. Applicants who re-registered their restricted and prohibited firearms could still do so free of charge.

3. Faxed and e-Mailed Registration Applications

As the registration deadline approached at the end of December, additional measures were added to further provide every opportunity for firearm owners to submit their registration applications before the deadline. In the last two weeks of December, registration application forms were faxed or e-mailed to applicants upon demand.

4. Electronic Messaging

As the December 31, 2002 registration deadline approached, the number of calls to the call centres and e-mails to the communications staff exceeded anticipated volumes and put a tremendous strain on resources. To deal with this situation, an electronic messaging feature was introduced that allowed

callers to order application forms without having to wait in queue to speak with a call centre agent. Telephone scripting was also revised to provide important recorded messages to callers enquiring about the Program. The result was an improvement in the ability to manage the number of calls received and the number of firearm transfers processed.

5. Verification of Firearms

Firearm owners who wanted to have their firearms verified could call the Canada Firearms Centre's toll-free number to obtain the name of an approved firearms verifier in their area. Volunteer verifiers, trained by the Canada Firearms Centre, provided an invaluable service to firearm owners. These verifiers not only verified the class and description of the firearms but, in many cases, helped people complete their applications and provided information on the Program.

6. Extension of Transfer Fee Waiver

On June 30, 2000, the fee to transfer and register a firearm to a new owner was waived for a period of time. Following consultations with businesses and the Minister's User Group on Firearms the waiver was extended until December 31, 2002 to coincide with the registration deadline. The fee waiver allowed a period of adjustment for the firearms community to become familiar with the firearms registration process, and to prevent firearms from being driven underground during the final registration phase. The \$25 transfer fee was reinstated on January 1, 2003.

7. Extension of Amnesty for Prohibited Handguns

On November 29, 2002, the Minister of Justice announced an extension to the amnesty that allowed individuals and businesses more time to dispose of prohibited firearms or prohibited short barrels. The extension until December 31, 2003 would ensure that individuals and businesses in possession of these firearms (that they were not eligible to possess under section 12(6) of the *Firearms Act*) would be protected until Parliament could complete its consideration of the proposed amendments contained in Bill C-10A.

8. Support for Compliant Registrants

On November 29, 2002, the Minister of Justice announced a six-month amnesty in response to the public's request for more time to comply with the law and to ease the Program's administrative burden. The amnesty was introduced for firearm owners who had submitted their firearm registration applications but who would not have their certificates in hand by January 1, 2003. This measure was part of the government's commitment to ensure that individuals and businesses that had acted to comply with the law would not be penalized. The amnesty would end June 30, 2003.

B. Easing the Administrative Burden

As the registration deadline advanced, Canadians sent in their registration applications in record numbers causing a strain on all resources. Many requests for assistance or for an application form could not be answered due to the large number of calls received late in the year. Several measures were taken to ease the administrative load.

Completing the Registration Phase

Shift schedules at the Central Processing Site were adjusted so that resources were reassigned to peak call volume times between 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Additional temporary staff was also added to handle the heavy influx of applications and calls. Bulk acknowledgements were e-mailed to all those who had e-mailed the Program.

To further ease the situation, the Minister added a second part to the amnesty on December 24, 2002. Licensed individuals who had attempted to register their firearms or obtain application forms without success could contact the Registrar in writing and submit a statement setting out their intention to apply to register their firearms before June 30, 2003. Individuals who sent a letter of intent were still required to submit a registration application.

IV. Maintaining Services to the Firearms Community

The Canada Firearms Centre and its partners continued to hone the various ways in which they interact with the diverse firearms community. Staff regularly provided information and responded to daily requests for assistance from the general public and from policing agencies.

A. Service to Firearm Owners

On a daily basis, the Canada Firearms Centre received questions and comments by phone and in writing through its toll-free number, e-mail, facsimile and regular post. Through these various channels, the Canada Firearms Centre learned first-hand what people wanted and in what areas it could improve its services.

1. "At Risk" Line

The Program continued to provide a confidential toll-free line for spouses and common-law partners to notify the Chief Firearms Officers of their apprehension concerning the issuance of firearm licences. The telephone number was printed on the licence application form in the space provided for the spouse or common-law partner's signature.

This line was also used by parents, school officials and other members of the public who wished to express concern about the issuance or retention of a firearm licence. The Chief Firearms Officers considered all calls received.

2. Help Lines

Members of the general public and businesses were offered various options for obtaining information and assistance of a general, specialized or technical nature. People could have their questions answered by calling the Canada Firearms Centre's toll-free number or by e-mail, facsimile or mail.

a) *General Information and Assistance*

Calls to the Canada Firearms Centre's toll-free number from all regions in Canada (except Quebec) and from outside Canada, were routed to the call centre at the Central Processing Site (CPS) in Miramichi, New Brunswick. Calls received from within the province of Quebec were routed to the call centre at the Quebec Processing Site (QPS) in Montreal.

In order to provide an equal service to each time zone across Canada, the CPS call centre operated from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 a.m., Atlantic time, from Monday to Friday. Each jurisdiction could call from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. local time. A slightly reduced service was available on Saturday and Sunday based on demand.

The Canada Firearms Centre's Communications and Client Services Directorate in Ottawa was also responsible for much of the front-line contact with firearm owners and users, as well as others (i.e., police officers and other public agents) whose day-to-day duties involve firearms and other regulated items.

Staff responded to a variety of enquiries regarding Canada's firearms laws, particularly on firearms licensing and registration, safe storage and transportation, safety training requirements, firearm transfers, inheritance, and public safety. Assistance and support were provided to firearm owners to help them comply with the licensing and registration requirements of the *Firearms Act*.

b) Firearms Expertise

The Canadian Firearms Registry offered assistance, guidance and firearms expertise to the public, government officials, and parties administering or enforcing the *Firearms Act*. Enquiries varied from explanations of the various types of classifications of firearms, grandfathering clauses associated with prohibited firearms and the requirements to register firearms.

Firearm owners wanting to have their firearms verified could reach an approved firearms verifier by calling the Canada Firearms Centre's toll-free number.

c) Technical Assistance

The Canada Firearms Centre offered on-line services on its Website. A technical help desk service provided assistance and technical support to individuals as they completed their applications to register their firearms on-line. Applicants could reach the technical help desk by phone or by e-mail. The help desk operated from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Eastern time, Monday to Friday.

3. Outreach

In 2002, representatives of the Canada Firearms Centre organized and attended 17 exhibits held at sports and hunting shows, police and Government of Canada events across the country. At these events, staff answered public enquiries on an individual basis and provided information on the *Firearms Act* and Regulations.

4. Publications

Throughout 2002, the Canada Firearms Centre distributed a variety of fact sheets, brochures, business cards with the toll-free number, and promotional items. A poster entitled "Safe and Responsible Firearms Use" was produced and distributed to businesses for display. The poster provided their clients with a quick snapshot of the main requirements of the *Firearms Act*. The Canada Firearms Centre also amended a booklet designed for the Aboriginal community which addressed frequently asked questions specific to Aboriginal Peoples. This booklet was produced in English, French, and Inuktitut. Pending parliamentary consideration of proposed legislative amendments to the *Firearms Act*, publication activities were lower in 2002 than in the three preceding years.

5. The Canada Firearms Centre Website

The Canada Firearms Centre's Website (www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca) provides general information on all aspects of the firearms legislation. The Website is updated regularly with the latest news releases, special bulletins, fact sheets, pamphlets and frequently asked questions.

Firearms statistical information, survey results and audit reports are posted on the site. Firearm owners and users can access historical information and a plain language guide to help them understand the firearms legislation. Specialized audiences such as public agents, justices of the peace, prosecutors, safety course instructors and target shooters can obtain information directly related to their needs. Canadians crossing the border and visitors to Canada can obtain information on import and export regulations. Applicants can obtain information on safety training requirements.

The Website provided a quick means for firearm owners to obtain essential Program information in order to meet the registration deadline. Most of the Canada Firearms Centre's publications were

available on the Website and many application forms could be downloaded from the site. Firearm owners were encouraged to use the Website to apply to register their firearms on-line, obtain application forms, get answers to their questions and general information on firearms.

6. Media Relations

In early 2002, the Canada Firearms Centre continued its advertising campaign to encourage licensed firearm owners to comply with the registration requirements of the *Firearms Act*. Spokespersons for the Canada Firearms Centre appeared on radio, on television and in print throughout the year providing information on the Program and on how firearm owners could comply with the *Firearms Act*. Media enquiries peaked at the end of 2002 with the release of the Auditor General of Canada's report on the Canadian Firearms Program and the registration deadline of December 31, 2002. In the last weeks of December 2002, the two Program spokespersons were giving a daily average of 20 media interviews each.

B. Support to the Law Enforcement Community

Throughout the year, the Program partners continued to provide support services to the policing community.

1. National Weapons Enforcement Support Team

The National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (NWEST) was formed in January 2001 in response to public and police concerns about the problem of smuggling and trafficking of illegal weapons, including issues of violence involving firearms. NWEST's membership is a network of police officers seconded from municipal, provincial and RCMP offices across the country.⁶

NWEST is not an enforcement unit, but a support team. Its mandate is not to lead or direct an investigation, but rather to provide investigative support and training. The team provides expert witnesses, gives information sessions and training, and provides analytical assistance and support to the enforcement community on the essential elements regarding search warrants for firearms or weapons related investigations.

NWEST works in close collaboration with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) on the tracing of firearms. NWEST and the BATF have co-sponsored workshops and training programs for enforcement officers on topics related to weapons trafficking and smuggling, and investigative techniques and methodologies. These sessions are a critical component in training law enforcement officers regarding weapons smuggling and trafficking.

In 2002, NWEST offered support to front-line officers by assisting in over 3,100 investigations, conducting more than 1,900 firearms traces with the assistance of BATF, and providing approximately 500 information sessions that detailed the mandate of NWEST, the Canadian Firearms Program and police enforcement requirements.

⁶ In order to align enforcement operations, NWEST became part of the National Police Services within the RCMP in 2003.

During the week of November 3, 2002, Canadian law enforcement officials met with members of the BATF to find joint solutions to the serious issue of firearms smuggling and trafficking across the Canada–U.S.A. border. This was the third meeting between the two organizations. The session was held in Halifax, attended by 100 participants from both countries.

2. RCMP Firearms Tracing Unit

A key component of any firearms control program is the ability to trace the origins of a firearm and the transactions in which it may have been involved. This process provides the history of a firearm from the manufacturer to the importer to the firearms dealer and to the individual owner.

The RCMP Firearms Tracing Unit receives requests to trace firearms from domestic and international enforcement agencies. The Unit performs traces in close collaboration with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms National Tracing Center in Falling Water, West Virginia, U.S.A. Other international requests for firearms tracing are coordinated through the Ottawa office of Interpol.

During 2002, the RCMP Firearms Tracing Unit received a total of 8,007 requests for firearm traces. Requests were divided into three main categories.

- Canadian traces (6,325 requests) for firearms that were registered or manufactured in Canada.
- United States traces (1,508 requests) for firearms that were manufactured in the U.S.A. or imported into the U.S.A.
- International traces (174 requests) for firearms that were manufactured outside North America and not imported into Canada or the U.S.A. A large percentage of the requests in 2002 came from Interpol in South Africa.

3. Legislative Training

The Canada Firearms Centre prepared and distributed training and information materials to police and other public agents, prosecutors, justices of the peace, firearms officers, and others involved in the administration and enforcement of the *Firearms Act*. Highlights of the 2002 calendar year included multiple special bulletins to these audiences on topics of relevance to their duties of employment. As well, an easy-to-read “Offences and Powers” laminated information sheet was distributed to police officers to help communicate the proposed legislative amendments.

4. Canadian Firearms Registry On-line

Several improvements to the Canadian Firearms Registry On-line (CFRO)⁷ application were performed during 2002. Substantial enhancements to the phonetic name-searching capability provided users with more effective query results. Changes were made to streamline notifications of licence application refusals. A considerable amount of work was done to prepare the system for the removal of the Restricted Weapon Registration System (RWRS) database following the end of the registration deadline. Preliminary work was also done towards the major migration of the CFRO from X400 messaging to the newer MQ Series technology.

⁷ A description of CFRO is provided in Annex D.

V. Preparing for Transition

As the Canada Firearms Centre planned its on-going phase of operation, it recognized that the existing Canadian Firearms Registration System (CFRS) technology would not be robust enough to continue to support the Program. The system's performance limitations, lack of full accounting functionality, and inability to sustain further enhancements without significant expenditure were key in the preparation of a restructuring plan for the future.

A. Re-engineering Business Lines

As part of the Program's long-term planning strategy, an extensive review of its business model began in 2001 and continued in full force in 2002. This initiative was carried out in preparation for the replacement of the Canadian Firearms Registration System. The new model would introduce changes that meet the requirements of the proposed amendments to the *Firearms Act* and its associated regulations.

B. Alternative Service Delivery Model

The Canada Firearms Centre pursued the concept of an alternative service delivery (ASD) model with the publication of a request for proposal on September 25, 2001. The Canada Firearms Centre sought a service provider who would replace the current Canadian Firearms Registration System.

On July 17, 2002 a contract was officially awarded to Team CENTRA, a joint venture between CGI Information Systems and Management Consultants Inc. (CGI) and BDP Business Data Services Limited (BDP). This business partnering approach would be beneficial to obtain the right mix of expertise and experience.

The plan is intended to ensure a smooth and successful transition from the building and development of the licensing and registration phases to an on-going operational environment. The plan will:

- a) ensure that the Program maintains a high standard of accountability;
- b) adopt a risk management framework in line with the public safety objectives of the *Firearms Act*;
- c) ensure and enhance compliance with Program requirements, access and client service;
- d) facilitate consistency with international obligations related to the illegal trafficking of firearms;
and
- e) maintain the security and privacy of the information and data in the Canadian Firearms Registry.

Team CENTRA will provide a number of services that support core Program delivery, namely:

- a) Enabling Technology: which includes operation and on-going maintenance of a system, a database, and interfaces to other necessary systems to support Program business lines, and technology provision and maintenance;
- b) IT Utility: which includes hardware, software, network, help desk support and training; and
- c) Service Management: which includes performance reporting, scheduled performance meetings, invoicing, change management and control, statistical reporting, and document and transition management.

The contract also provides the option of having some business operations performed by Team CENTRA.

Under this ASD model, government officials will continue to be fully responsible and accountable for all aspects of the Program, including the component designated to be administered by the service provider. The Canada Firearms Centre will continue to make decisions and provide leadership and governance for the Program and will oversee its delivery from an accountability perspective.

Governance activities will include the management of policy, communications with the public, standards setting and the approach to import and export interfaces with the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT).

Accountability will be ensured through the effective and efficient management of the financial framework, Program operations and the ASD arrangement, human resources, the privacy and security of information, and strategic communications with all stakeholders and firearm owners.

C. Future Directions

On-going planning, based primarily on legislative amendments to the *Firearms Act* and on the alternative service delivery model, point to the following activities in the coming years:

- a) Simplifying the requirements for the licence renewal process;
- b) Aligning licence renewals to avoid large yearly volumes within the 5-year window;
- c) Streamlining the firearm transfer process;
- d) Grandfathering certain firearms that were recorded to businesses or registered to individuals between February 14, 1995 and December 1, 1998;
- e) Extending the terms for business licences as well as clarifying licensing requirements for employees for that business;
- f) Introducing a pre-screening process for non-residents bringing firearms into Canada; and
- g) Expanding the use of Internet services and other electronic applications.

VI. Effectiveness of the Program

The Firearms Program is still maturing. It will take at least several more years to begin to effectively evaluate the success of the Program and its contribution to a safer society.

A. Enhancing Public Safety

The Canadian Firearms Program recognizes that the majority of firearm owners are law-abiding citizens who acknowledge their role in maintaining public safety. Firearm owners in Canada have a long-standing tradition of responsible firearm use including hunting, target shooting and gun collecting.

A primary goal of the Program is to enhance public safety by keeping firearms from those who should not have them and ensuring that those who do own and use firearms are able to do so safely and responsibly.

1. Licence Applications Received

With the licensing phase of the Program successfully completed and the deadline for submission of Possession-Only Licences (POL) having passed, 2002 saw a dramatic decrease in the number of licence applications received and processed.

In 2002, the Program received 129,198 applications for licences. This brought the total number of applications received since December 1, 1998 to 2,062,303.

Some applications were rejected or withdrawn for administrative reasons. For example, if an applicant was underage for a Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) or if an applicant applied more than once, the Program rejected the application. In other cases, if an applicant did not respond to a request for information, his or her application was removed from active consideration. Before this occurred, applicants were contacted by phone and/or in writing in an attempt to obtain the missing information. In 2002, 60,409 licence applications were withdrawn or rejected.

2. Licence Applications Refused

Under the *Firearms Act*, a Chief Firearms Officer is authorized to refuse an application for a firearm licence if the applicant does not meet eligibility criteria.⁸ Some of the most common reasons for refusing an application are the existence of a prohibition order, a history of mental illness or a conviction for a violent offence.

In 2002, the Chief Firearms Officers refused a total of 1,521 applications for firearm licences. Of those refused, 933 applications (61%) were from individuals applying for Possession-Only Licences (POL)⁹ and 578 applications (38%) were from individuals who had applied for Possession and Acquisition Licences (PAL). The Chief Firearms Officers refused six applications for Minor's Licences and four applications for Business Licences.

⁸ To be eligible for a firearm licence, an individual must meet several public safety criteria, such as safety training requirements and background checks performed against the CPIC system.

⁹ Applications for POLs were no longer accepted after January 1, 2001.

Effectiveness of the Program

The overall number of applications refused in 2002 decreased by 18% compared with the previous year. This decrease can be directly attributed to a reduction in the number of licence applications processed between 2001 and 2002.

TABLE 1:
Number of licence applications refused in 2002 by type of licence and by province or territory

Province/Territory	PAL	POL	Minor's Licence	Business Licence	Total
Alberta	27	59	0	0	86
British Columbia	98	266	2	0	366
Manitoba	21	27	0	0	48
New Brunswick	6	33	0	0	39
Newfoundland and Labrador	6	7	0	0	13
Northwest Territories	1	0	0	0	1
Nova Scotia	11	29	0	0	40
Nunavut	11	1	0	0	12
Ontario	167	180	4	0	351
Prince Edward Island	7	2	0	0	9
Quebec	212	309	0	3	524
Saskatchewan	11	20	0	1	32
Yukon Territory	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	578	933	6	4	1,521

3. Licences Issued

In 2002 alone, 133,404 Possession and Acquisition Licences (PALs) were issued.¹⁰ This brought the total number of PALs issued since December 1, 1998 to 564,096. In comparison with 2001 figures, there was a 46% decrease in the number of PALs issued in 2002. This significant decrease marks the end of the licensing phase and the beginning of a stable licensing environment.

In 2002 the number of Business Licences issued decreased by 237 from the previous year. Over 50% of the 2,918 Minor's Licences were issued by the Chief Firearms Officer of Ontario. Since December 1, 1998, 10,493 Minor's Licences have been issued. In 2002, 67,454 Possession-Only Licences (POLs) were issued,¹¹ bringing the total number of POLs issued to individuals since December 1, 1998 to 1,338,350.

¹⁰ The number of Possession and Acquisition Licences (PALs) issued exceeded the number of licence applications received in 2002. This was due to the fact that PALs were issued following processing of licence applications received during the year as well as applications that had been received in the previous year.

¹¹ In 2002, Possession-Only Licences were issued following completion of processing of applications received in previous years that, for various reasons, had not been finalized (for example, applicants had not previously passed eligibility clearance, requested information from applicants who had sent in incomplete applications had not been received, or outcomes of reference hearings were outstanding).

Effectiveness of the Program

Although Firearms Acquisition Certificates (FACs) are no longer issued, as of December 31, 2002, 67,702 individuals continued to hold valid FACs.

FIGURE 1:
Number of licences issued in 2002 by type of licence

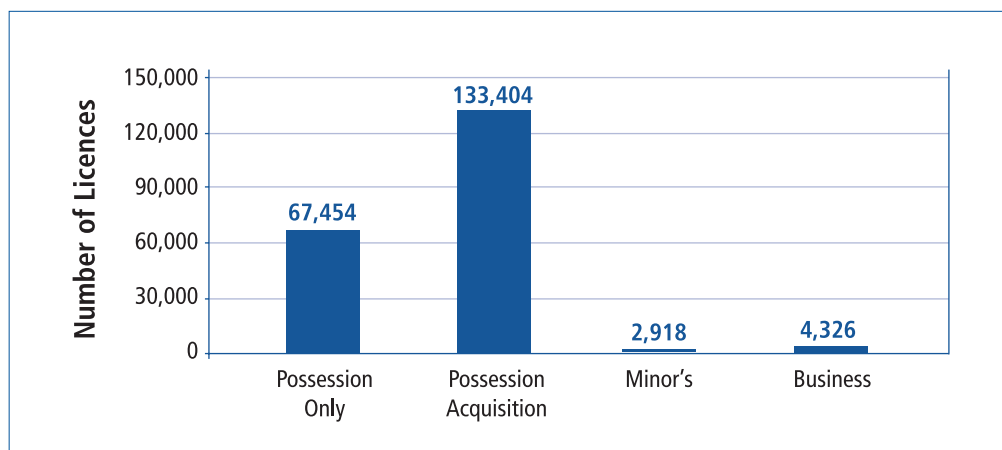


TABLE 2:
Number of licences issued in 2002 by type of licence and by province or territory

Province/Territory	PAL ¹²	POL	Minor's Licence	Business Licence	Total
Alberta	16,997	3,667	333	398	21,395
British Columbia	14,805	4,865	54	465	20,189
Manitoba	5,705	1,232	63	208	7,208
New Brunswick	2,574	2,572	54	182	5,382
Newfoundland and Labrador	3,949	453	103	360	4,865
Northwest Territories	512	54	7	48	621
Nova Scotia	3,213	1,358	362	209	5,142
Nunavut	634	10	2	54	700
Ontario	39,185	4,753	1,664	995	46,597
Prince Edward Island	275	59	0	33	367
Quebec	37,573	46,344	184	981	85,082
Saskatchewan	7,419	2,023	81	378	9,901
Yukon Territory	563	64	11	15	653
TOTAL	133,404	67,454	2,918	4,326	208,102

¹² Firearm Acquisition Certificates (FACs) have been included with PALs.

Effectiveness of the Program

FIGURE 2:
Number of licences issued between December 1, 1998 and December 31, 2002 by type of licence

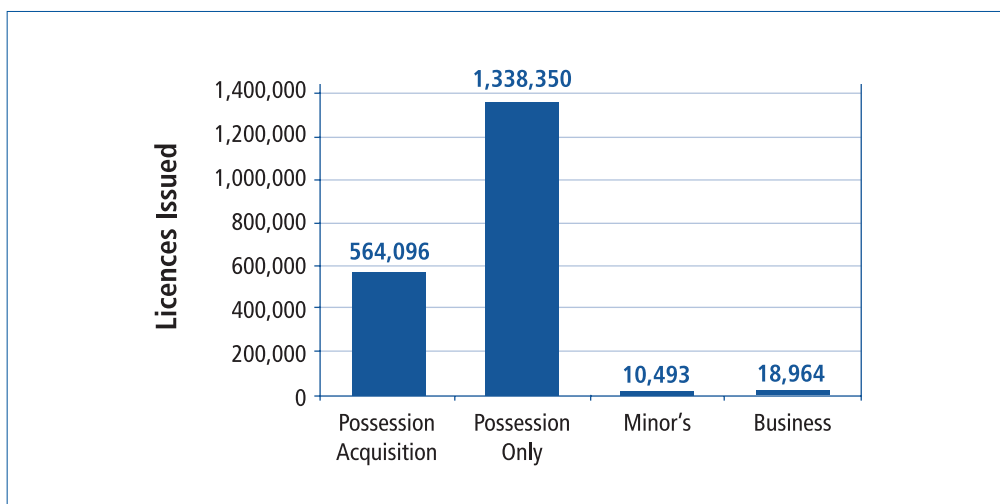


TABLE 3:
Number of licences issued between December 1, 1998 and December 31, 2002 by type of licence and by province or territory

Province/Territory	PAL	POL	Minor's Licence	Business Licence	Total
Alberta	63,596	139,380	1,149	1,860	205,985
British Columbia	56,704	157,333	187	1,978	216,202
Manitoba	27,025	59,411	223	980	87,639
New Brunswick	11,538	81,800	325	898	94,561
Newfoundland and Labrador	20,308	53,819	375	1,528	76,030
Northwest Territories	3,769	2,221	59	206	6,255
Nova Scotia	12,587	78,991	1,896	875	94,349
Nunavut	5,037	392	14	175	5,618
Ontario	158,509	355,259	5,359	4,168	523,295
Prince Edward Island	1,281	7,068	19	133	8,501
Quebec	168,243	332,014	226	4,384	504,867
Saskatchewan	32,649	67,586	599	1,718	102,552
Yukon	2,850	3,076	62	61	6,049
TOTAL	564,096	1,338,350	10,493	18,964	1,931,903

Effectiveness of the Program

TABLE 4:
Percentage of licence holders (individuals) based on provincial and territorial populations

Province/Territory	Total Licences Issued to Individuals	Population of Province (2002)	Percentage of Licence Holders Per Capita
Alberta	204,125	3,113,600	6.56
British Columbia	214,224	4,141,300	5.17
Manitoba	86,659	1,150,800	7.53
New Brunswick	93,663	756,700	12.38
Newfoundland and Labrador	74,502	513,600	14.51
Northwest Territories	6,049	41,400	14.61
Nova Scotia	93,474	944,800	9.89
Nunavut	5,443	28,700	18.97
Ontario	519,127	12,068,300	4.3
Prince Edward Island	8,368	139,900	5.98
Quebec	500,483	7,455,200	6.71
Saskatchewan	100,834	1,011,800	9.97
Yukon	5,988	29,900	20.03
TOTAL	1,912,939	31,396,000	

4. Sustenance Hunting

Individuals who require firearms to hunt or trap to sustain themselves or their families can apply for non-restricted firearm licence privileges for this purpose. If they qualify, their licence and registration fees are waived. In 2002, the Chief Firearms Officers determined that 2,817 applicants qualified for a fee waiver.

5. Carrier Firearms Licences

In 2002, one application for an international Carrier Firearms Licence was refused and 171 Carrier Firearms Licences were issued. Of these, 114 were issued to international carriers, 50 to inter-provincial carriers and seven to intra-provincial carriers. There were six fewer Carrier Firearms Licences issued in 2002 than in 2001.

In the last four years, 12 applications for Carrier Firearms Licences have been refused, 700 licences have been issued and two licences have been revoked.

6. Authorizations to Transport and to Carry

In 2002, the Chief Firearms Officers refused eight applications for Authorizations to Transport (ATT) and issued a total of 54,780 ATTs. The numbers remained consistent with those of the previous year.

Activities surrounding Authorizations to Carry (ATCs) were similar to those of 2001. In 2002, four applications were refused and 6,519 ATCs were issued.

7. Registration Applications Received

By the end of 2002, a total of 1,976,474¹³ personalized registration application forms had been mailed to licensed firearm owners.

Owners were encouraged to apply using the on-line application. The Canada Firearms Centre had estimated that 10% of firearm owners would use the on-line registration application in the first year (based on industry forecasted usage when introducing a new format). Usage far exceeded expectations. By the end of 2002, of the 1,677,370 registration applications that had been received and processed, 27.7% of all registrants (464,562) had applied to register their firearms on-line. The remaining 72.3% (1,212,808) had applied using paper application forms.

Internet usage was particularly significant in 2002 – 395,967 (37%) of the 1,069,178 registration applications received and processed were submitted using the Internet. The remaining 673,211 applications were submitted using paper forms.

Each application can contain descriptions of one or several firearms. The 1,069,178 registration applications received from individuals in 2002 alone represented 3,704,907 firearms. The 1,677,370 applications that have been received from individuals between December 1, 1998 and the end of December 2002, represent 5,409,786 firearms.

Businesses applied to register their firearms using paper application forms or using an automated system called "Electronic Firearms Application Submission Tool (e-FAST)". In 2002, of the 4,156 registration applications received from the firearms business community, 1,790 were submitted using e-FAST. These 4,156 applications represented 248,087 firearms that were either newly manufactured by businesses in Canada, or firearms that were imported into the country. By the end of 2002, a total of 15,948 registration applications to register 722,563 firearms had been received from businesses since the December 1, 1998 implementation date.

8. Transfer Applications Received

On December 1, 1998, all persons who acquired a firearm from an individual or business within Canada were required to seek approval from their Chief Firearms Officer for this change of ownership prior to taking possession of the firearm. The transfer of a firearm requires both the participation of the current owner (seller) as well as the future owner (buyer). The transaction, if completed, results in a new registration certificate being issued to the buyer, thereby linking the firearm to the new owner. The seller's registration certificate is then invalidated.

In 2002, individuals and businesses¹⁴ submitted 169,307 applications to transfer firearms.

¹³ This total includes subsequent mail outs of application forms following address change notifications, requests from licensees or as part of the registration compliance strategy.

¹⁴ An application to transfer can include one or several firearms.

9. Registration Applications Refused

Under the *Firearms Act*, the Registrar holds the authority to refuse an application to register a firearm. This authority is an integral part of the contribution of the *Firearms Act* to public safety and effective firearms control. Two of the most common reasons for refusing an application are that the applicant does not have a valid firearm licence, or that the class of firearm for which the applicant is licensed does not match the class of firearm the applicant is attempting to register.

Each registration application received can contain information on one or several firearms. Of the 3,704,907 firearm descriptions submitted in 2002, 123 were refused. This represents a 16% increase in the number of refusals from the previous year. From December 1, 1998 to the end of 2002, the Registrar refused 620 firearm registrations.

10. Destroyed, Deactivated and Exported Firearms

Confronted by the inability to legally continue possessing a specific firearm, or not wishing to maintain a firearm in working order, some individuals opt to dispose of their firearms by deactivating, destroying or exporting them. When a firearm is exported, deactivated or destroyed, its registration status in the Canadian Firearms Registration System is confirmed and becomes part of the historical data.

In 2002, 907 registered firearms were deactivated, 5,254 were destroyed and 236,288 were exported.

11. Registration Certificates Issued

As 2002 was the final year for the registration of commencement day firearms,¹⁵ the number of firearm registration certificates issued during the year far exceeded that of all other years. The increase in the overall number of registered firearms in turn increased the number of firearms transferred to individuals and businesses.

At the end of December 2002, a total of 5,829,669 firearms were registered in Canada. This number excludes the 483,323 previously-registered firearms that were subsequently deactivated, destroyed or exported.

In 2002 alone, a total of 4,225,584 registration certificates were issued for all types of registration transactions (re-registrations of restricted and prohibited firearms by individuals, transferred firearms and first-time registrations by individuals and businesses). Of these, 91.4% were for firearms classified as non-restricted, 5.5% were for firearms classified as restricted, and 3.1% were for firearms classified as prohibited.

The 4,225,584 registration certificates were issued to 2,508 businesses (including 50 museums) and 1,054,307 individuals. Registered firearms were recorded for 210 public agencies.

Individuals were issued 3,878,960 registration certificates which included 142,725 certificates for transferred firearms. The remaining 3,736,235 certificates were issued for first-time registrations and re-registrations of firearms, including 5,537 certificates to non-residents with valid firearm licences.

¹⁵ Commencement day firearms are firearms that were in the possession of an individual on December 1, 1998.

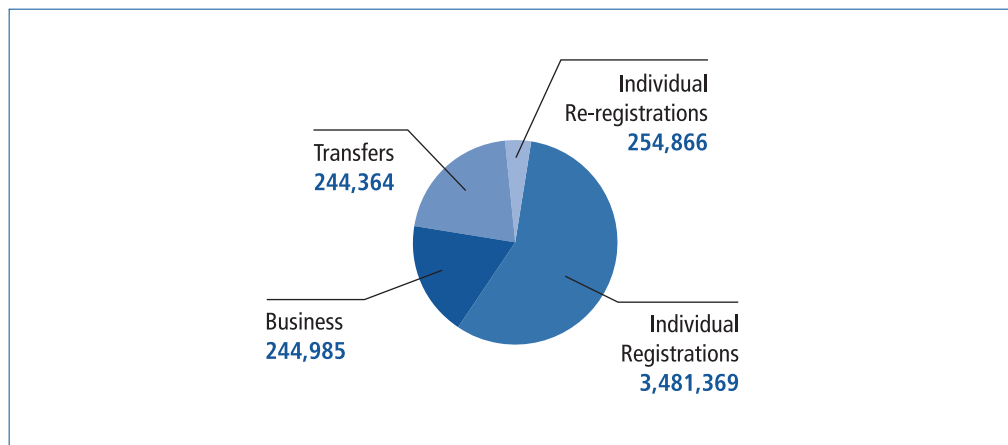
Effectiveness of the Program

In comparison, 1,129,234 certificates had been issued the previous year in this same category. The difference between 2001 and 2002 represents a 230% increase in the number of certificates issued.

Businesses were issued 338,542 registration certificates in 2002. Of these, 244,985 certificates were issued for firearms that had not previously been registered, and 93,557 were issued following the transfer of a firearm from an individual or another business.

The remaining 8,082 firearm registrations were recorded as certificates in the CFRS database following the transfer of firearms to public agencies, however, no certificates were issued.¹⁶

CHART 1:
Number of registration certificates issued in 2002 by type of application received



A provincial breakdown indicates that over 50% of the registration certificates issued to individuals in 2002 were to firearm owners in Ontario (31%) and Quebec (22%). Similarly, businesses in Ontario were issued the most certificates (74%). This is due to the fact that the largest manufacturer of firearms in Canada is located in Ontario.

¹⁶ While public agencies are not required to inform the Registrar of their inventories until 2004, transfers of registered firearms to public agencies are recorded as a means of tracking the movement of these firearms from businesses to public agencies.

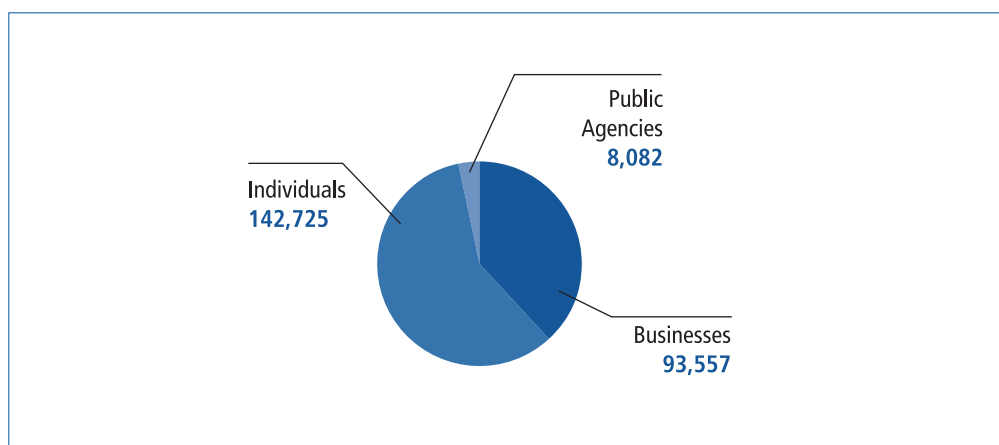
Effectiveness of the Program

TABLE 5:
Number of registration certificates issued to individuals and to businesses for newly registered and re-registered firearms in 2002 by province or territory

Province/Territory	Registration Certificates (Individuals)	Registration Certificates (Businesses)
Alberta	474,696	12,775
British Columbia	547,528	9,427
Manitoba	201,176	6,334
New Brunswick	104,112	1,577
Newfoundland and Labrador	49,271	1,910
Northwest Territories	9,976	421
Nova Scotia	112,873	1,199
Nunavut	4,157	722
Ontario	1,163,049	180,550
Prince Edward Island	7,042	80
Quebec	831,470	25,758
Saskatchewan	214,650	4,028
Yukon Territory	10,698	195
Non-resident mailing address	5,537	9
TOTAL	3,736,235	244,985

Of the 244,364 registered transfers, approximately 59% (142,725) were transfers of firearms to individuals, 38% (93,557) were transfers to businesses and 3% (8,082) were firearms transferred from a business to the inventory of a public agency. In comparison with figures from the previous year, the number of transfers increased by 60,460 in 2002.

CHART 2:
Number of transferred firearms in 2002 by type of new owner (buyer)



12. Restricted Weapon Registration System

As of December 31, 2002, 749,428 firearms, belonging to 367,521 owners, still remained in the Restricted Weapon Registration System (RWRS) database. Of these, 576,232 were firearms registered to individuals. The remaining 173,196 firearms were recorded to businesses and public agencies. During 2002, 275,623 firearm records were removed from the RWRS. Most of these records were migrated to the Canadian Firearms Registration System database at which time new registration certificates were issued.

FIGURE 3:
Yearly comparison of the number of owners and firearms still registered in the RWRS database since the *Firearms Act* came into effect

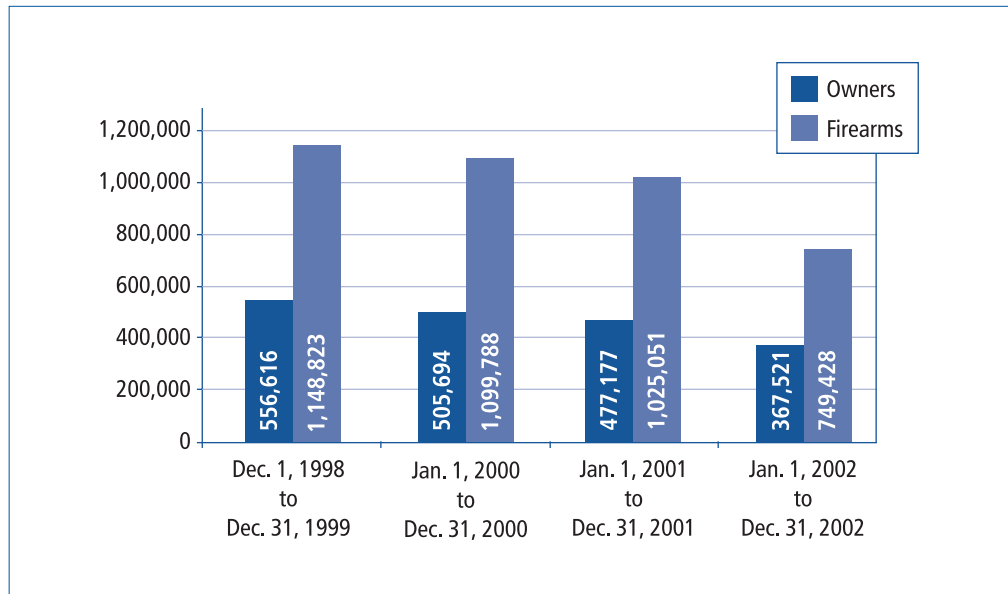


TABLE 6:
Number of owners and their associated firearms still recorded in RWRS as of December 31, 2002

Type of Owner	Number of Owners	Number of Firearms
Dealers	3,515	46,865
Museums	132	3,626
Individuals	361,344	576,232
Public agencies	2,530	122,705
Total	367,521	749,428

B. Maintaining Public Safety Through On-going Monitoring

Continuous monitoring ensures that only eligible licensees retain their firearm licences and that registered firearms remain the rightful property of their licensed owners.

1. Revocations of Licences

A Chief Firearms Officer has the authority under the *Firearms Act* to revoke a firearm licence for any good and sufficient reason including where the holder of the licence is no longer eligible to hold the licence or contravenes any conditions attached to the licence.

In 2002, 1,529 firearm licences were revoked. Of these, 444 were Possession and Acquisition Licences (PALs), 912 were Possession-Only Licences (POLs), 29 were Business Licences, eight were Minor's Licences and 136 were Firearms Acquisition Certificates (FACs). No Carrier Firearms Licences were revoked in 2002. The province of Ontario revoked the most licences (41%).

TABLE 7:
Number of licences revoked in 2002 by licence type and by province or territory

Province/Territory	PAL	POL	Business Licence	Minor's Licence	FAC	Total
Alberta	28	52	0	1	9	90
British Columbia	56	110	3	0	28	197
Manitoba	18	47	0	0	11	76
New Brunswick	4	22	0	0	2	28
Newfoundland and Labrador	17	46	0	0	2	65
Northwest Territories	1	1	0	0	2	4
Nova Scotia	1	52	0	0	1	54
Nunavut	6	0	0	0	0	6
Ontario	171	399	8	7	46	631
Prince Edward Island	0	9	0	0	0	9
Quebec	129	153	18	0	33	333
Saskatchewan	9	18	0	0	2	29
Yukon Territory	4	3	0	0	0	7
TOTAL	444	912	29	8	136	1,529

2. Revocations of Authorizations to Transport and to Carry

In 2002, Chief Firearms Officers revoked two Authorizations to Transport in Ontario and 29 Authorizations to Carry (22 in Nova Scotia, 6 in Ontario and 1 in Quebec).

3. Revocations of Registration Certificates

Continuous monitoring ensures that licensees may retain their eligibility to hold firearm licences and that registered firearms may remain the rightful property of their licensed owners. When eligibility monitoring reveals that a firearm should no longer remain in the hands of its owner, the Registrar is authorized under the *Firearms Act* to revoke the firearms registration certificate. The reasons for revoking a registration certificate are similar to those for refusing an application, namely the existence of a prohibition order or a conviction for a violent offence. Most revocations of registration certificates result from revocations of individual or business firearm licences.

In 2002, a total of 459 registration certificates were revoked. This represents a 250% increase in revocations compared with 2001 numbers. This increase is largely due to the significant increase in the number of registration certificates issued in 2002. Since the commencement of universal registration under the *Firearms Act* on December 1, 1998, a total of 659 certificates have been revoked.

4. Prohibition Orders

Firearm prohibition orders are issued following the outcome of court hearings, probation decisions, or pending a hearing as provided for in law. The security of individuals and of the public at large is significantly enhanced when law enforcement agencies are aware of persons who are prohibited from possessing a firearm. It should be noted that a prohibition order does not necessarily mean that the individual has ever possessed a firearm.

Law enforcement agencies enter prohibition orders into the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system. This information is then transferred to the Canadian Firearms Registration System (CFRS) through an interface. Through continuous eligibility checking, CFRS flags all potential licensee files and brings them to the attention of the Chief Firearms Officers for action.

The number of prohibition orders has continued to increase over the last decade. In 2002, a total of 32,670 persons were prohibited from possessing a firearm. This represents a 12% increase over the previous year. A comparison with the number of entries of prohibition orders 10 years earlier (1992) indicates a significant 180% increase.

Effectiveness of the Program

FIGURE 4:
Number of persons prohibited from possessing a firearm in 2002 by province or territory

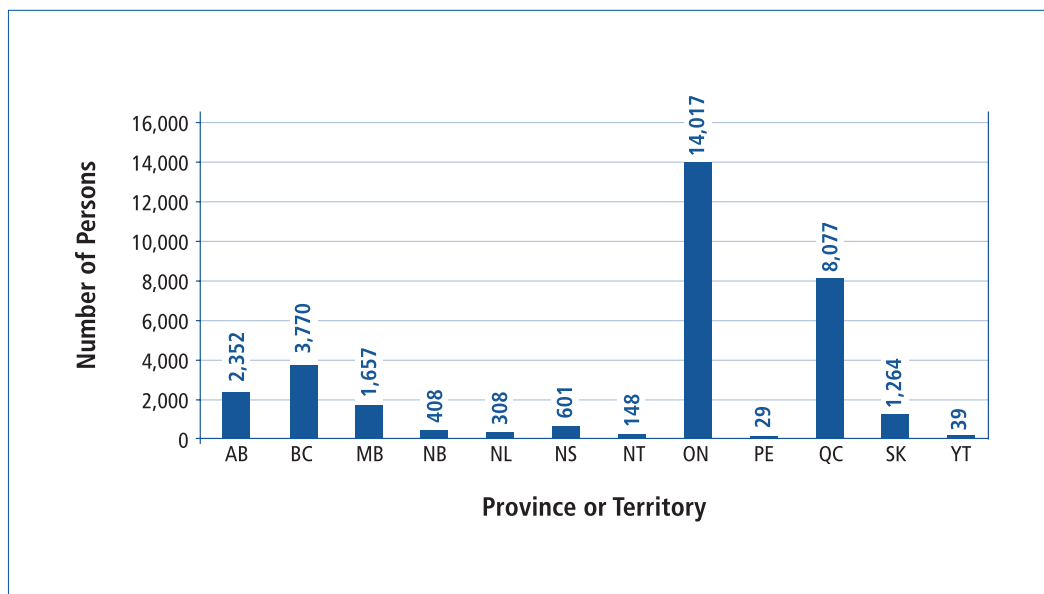
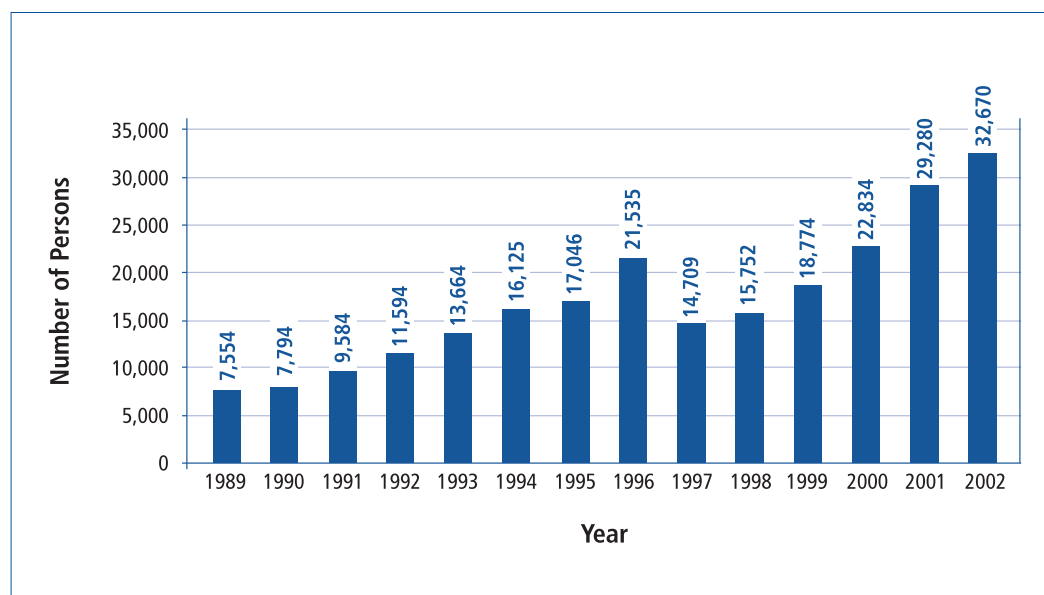


FIGURE 5:
Number of persons prohibited from possessing a firearm between 1989 and 2002



5. Canadian Firearms Registry On-line

On average, the Canadian Firearms Registry On-line (CFRO) is queried by the policing community over 1,500 times daily. In 2002 alone, the system was queried 561,213 times. From December 1, 1998 to the end of December 2002, the CFRO system was queried 2,215,339 times.

C. How Public Safety Has Been Maintained

Through universal licensing of firearm owners and the registration of firearms, the Canadian Firearms Program is designed to improve public safety by controlling access to firearms and ammunition, promoting their safe and responsible use, and controlling specific types of firearms.

1. Licensing and Registration Work Together

The elements of licensing and registration maintain public safety in the following ways:

- a) Firearm education is a fundamental element of the Canadian Firearms Program that ensures that a firearm user has basic firearm safety training. To apply for a Possession and Acquisition Licence, an applicant must have satisfied the requirements of the Canadian Firearms Safety Course or have been alternatively certified. The course ensures that all those who use firearms are fully aware of their responsibility for the safe handling, transport and storage of firearms.
- b) Background checks are conducted on every person who applies for a firearm licence. These checks are done to prevent people who pose a threat to themselves or to others from legally acquiring a firearm. Once licensed, continuous eligibility screening enables the revocation of licences from individuals who become public safety risks.
- c) Safe storage regulations require that all firearms be stored unloaded and be made inoperable, usually through a locking device. Licensing recognizes an owner's accountability for the safe use and storage of his or her firearm.
- d) Registration provides the link between a firearm and its rightful owner and makes the owner accountable and responsible for his or her firearm. Licensed owners are more likely to report their lost or stolen firearms to police. If stolen, a registered firearm can be traced and is more likely to be returned to its rightful owner.
- e) Tracking or tracing a firearm is made easier when it is registered. Historical data can determine the chronology of ownership and assist law enforcement agencies in their investigations where firearms are involved in crimes. The ability to trace firearms back to their owners also helps curtail the trafficking and smuggling of firearms and facilitates the enforcement of prohibition orders.
- f) Providing firearms information to the policing community through a nationwide police computer network gives police on-line accessibility to information on licensed individuals and their registered firearms. This information may be essential to a criminal investigation or when responding to calls such as domestic disputes or threatened suicides.

2. Reported Stolen, Missing and Recovered Firearms

The enforcement community records stolen, missing and recovered firearms in the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system. An interface between CPIC and the Canadian Firearms Registration System (CFRS) ensures that registered firearms are appropriately flagged. If needed, the Registrar will contact the policing agency that maintains the CPIC record to provide them with information regarding the firearm in question. This may lead to the refusal of a registration application or the revocation of a registration certificate.

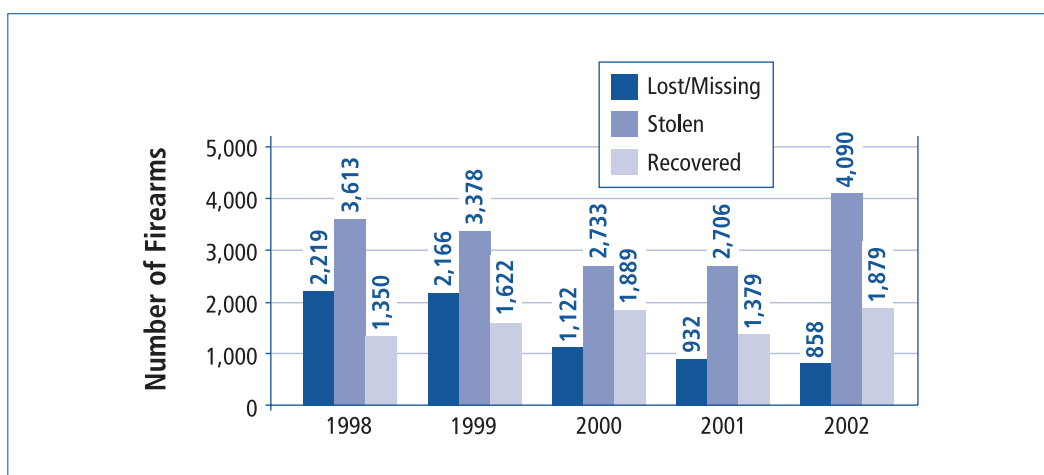
Firearm owners are reporting their stolen firearms in increasing numbers. Public awareness and owners' accountability associated with firearm licensing and registration have resulted in a 51% increase (compared with the previous year), in the number of reports of stolen firearms.

In the year 2002, 4,090 firearms were recorded as having been stolen. The province of Quebec reported the most entries for stolen firearms representing 25.28% of all entries across Canada. Quebec also recorded the highest percentage of stolen firearms in the year 2001.

The 858 firearms recorded as missing in 2002 represent a 10% decrease from 2001, understating the importance of safe storage and use practices by firearm owners.

Registered firearms are easier to trace back to their owners. In 2002, 1,879 firearms were recovered. Between 2001 and 2002, there was a 36% increase in the number of recovered firearms.

FIGURE 6:
Number of lost/
missing, stolen and
recovered firearms
in the last 5 years



3. Affidavits

The Program assisted the policing community and crown prosecutors by preparing affidavits that certified licensing or registration information related to individuals or firearms (for example, concerning the status of an individual's licence or whether or not a firearm is registered). This certification is based on data maintained and controlled by both the Chief Firearms Officers and the Registrar. In 2002, the Registrar alone prepared 381 affidavits.

4. Successful NWEST Ventures

The National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (NWEST) was involved in 3,100 reports in 2002. The following examples demonstrate NWEST's crucial role and effectiveness in helping police enforce the *Firearms Act* and in helping to increase public safety with respect to firearms in Canada.

- a) NWEST members assisted police in Western Canada in executing a public safety warrant when an individual made threats to a school principal and to several employees of local businesses. As the individual lived directly across from the school where the principal worked, there was concern that he would follow through with his threats. Police found a number of shotguns and rifles unsafely stored in a closet in the individual's home. The firearms were seized and NWEST members assisted police with having him prohibited from owning firearms.
- b) NWEST supported police in Western Canada when an individual involved in divorce proceedings became upset in a courtroom and later threatened to kill those involved in the proceedings including his spouse, her lawyer and the judge. NWEST investigation revealed that the suspect had recently received a firearm licence and had three handguns registered to him. Police investigation led to an arrest and seizure of the firearms.
- c) NWEST assisted police in Montreal following a domestic situation and a firearms seizure. NWEST attended and helped develop information that led to an additional seizure of 21 handguns and 45,000 rounds of ammunition. Several criminal charges were laid and a firearms prohibition was sought.
- d) NWEST assisted a municipal police agency in Quebec with the preparation of search warrants from information developed on a firearms investigation. This resulted in 10 kilograms of C-4 explosives and 2 handguns being seized. Two individuals face several criminal charges.
- e) NWEST Quebec members aided in reviewing information from home invasions and firearms thefts from residences. NWEST provided assistance in the preparation of search warrants. During the operation, 58 members of an organized crime gang were arrested, more than 200 criminal charges were laid and more than 50% of the stolen firearms were found and seized.
- f) NWEST assisted police in Atlantic Canada when two firearms were seized during an investigation of possible child abuse. The suspect was licensed and had registered firearms. Two firearm charges were laid and a firearms prohibition was sought.
- g) Police in Atlantic Canada found a firearm in the wall of a residence that was believed to have been used in 1987 in an unsolved homicide. NWEST assisted in the examination of the firearm.
- h) In 2002, NWEST assisted police in Atlantic Canada when an individual threatened to bring a firearm to his place of work and start shooting. NWEST assisted in the preparation of nine warrants and confirmed that the suspect had nine registered firearms. These firearms were subsequently seized.

Annex A – Background

Firearms laws are not new to Canada. The first firearm laws were introduced in 1892, requiring owners of pistols to carry a certificate of exemption. In 1919 and 1920, it became a criminal offence for anyone to purchase any firearm without first having a firearms permit. In 1934, a centralized registry was established, under the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which required all handguns to be registered. In 1951, automatic firearms were added to the category of firearms that had to be registered.

In 1979, it became mandatory to obtain a Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC) and submit to a police background check before being allowed to legally acquire a firearm. When Bill C-17 came into effect in 1992, gun owners were required to provide a photograph and two references, and take government-approved firearms safety training. Bill C-17 also introduced greater restrictions on the use and ownership of military, para-military and high-firepower guns, as well as new regulations for the safe storage, handling and transportation of firearms.

In 1992, a Firearms Legislation Task Force was established within the Department of Justice. This task force was instrumental in developing the *Firearms Act* (Bill C-68). The *Firearms Act* and its supporting Regulations apply to all persons (including visitors to Canada) and businesses that own, acquire, sell, or use firearms in Canada. The Act, which was proclaimed in December 1995, is the underlying legislation for the establishment of the Canada Firearms Centre and the Canadian Firearms Program.

Formally set up in 1996, the Canada Firearms Centre is the central headquarters responsible for the overall implementation of the Program. A number of federal, provincial and territorial partners deliver the Program throughout the country. The Canada Firearms Centre has central responsibility for overall delivery of the Program; the other jurisdictions involved have more discrete roles. Two roles are crucial to the Program: the Chief Firearms Officer who is the responsible authority for the licensing of individuals, and the Registrar of Firearms who is the responsible authority for the registration of firearms.

The Program became operational on December 1, 1998 when the *Firearms Act* came into effect and the Canada Firearms Centre started accepting and processing licence applications from businesses and individuals.

Program Objectives

The overall policy objectives of the Program include:

- 1) maintaining the non-violent character of Canada;
- 2) preserving public health and safety in Canada;
- 3) preventing the criminal misuse of firearms;
- 4) reducing firearm suicides and accidents; and
- 5) improving cost-recovery and cost-effectiveness.

Program Components

These policy objectives are supported by three principal components:

- 1) Legislative: this refers to the overall legislative framework for the Program, as enacted by Parliament and embodied in the 1995 legislation. This element brings forth tougher penalties for criminal firearm use, strengthened border controls, and licensing and registration requirements.
- 2) Regulatory: Section 117 of the *Firearms Act* enables the Governor in Council to establish regulations that complement or define the terms and administrative conditions of the legislation.
- 3) Program: the Canadian Firearms Program is a multi-provincial, multi-federal department-administered program.

Program Phases

The Program is implemented in three main phases:

- Phase 1 – Licensing: the *Firearms Act* called for the licensing of all firearm owners as of January 1, 2001.
- Phase 2 – Registration: the Act set the deadline for the registration of all firearms as January 1, 2003.
- Phase 3 – On-going operations: focus shifts from licensing and registration to solidifying management practices, risk management, client services and quality assurance.

Annex B – Key Administrators of the Firearms Program

Partner operations represent an essential component in the administration of the Canadian Firearms Program. Each of the federal partners is responsible for discrete elements of Program delivery.

Canada Firearms Centre

In 1996, the Canadian Firearms Centre was established as a division of the Department of Justice. In the summer of 2003, the Centre became a Department and was renamed the Canada Firearms Centre under the direction of the Commissioner of Firearms.

The Canada Firearms Centre was designated to be the single point of responsibility and accountability for the implementation of the Canadian Firearms Program. The automated infrastructure (the Canadian Firearms Registration System) was developed and is maintained by the Canada Firearms Centre for the Program. Overall responsibility for policy, technology support, communications and the management of human resources also rests with the Canada Firearms Centre.

The Registrar of Firearms

The Registrar of Firearms (the Registrar) is responsible for the decision-making and administrative work related to the registration of firearms for individuals and businesses and for the issuance of international and interprovincial carrier firearms licences to businesses. The Registrar registers firearms to new owners when they are transferred.

The Registrar maintains and operates the Canadian Firearms Registry (the Registry). The Registry's primary role is the identification, classification and registration of firearms. Registry staff handle problematic application and eligibility issues, perform initial background checks on applicants on behalf of the Chief Firearms Officers, provide a technical advisory role to firearm owners and respond to queries from various sources. Staff provide policing agencies across Canada with affidavits for court purposes, assist these agencies with their investigations by outlining the complete registration history of a firearm, and appear as witnesses for court hearings as required. The Registry works closely with its partners to enforce the public safety element of the Canadian Firearms Program.

In 2004, consistent with proposals made by the Program, the Registrar will also be responsible for recording the firearms inventories of public agencies (police, federal, provincial and municipal governments). This encompasses the firearms used by these agencies as well as those under police protection (seized, found or accepted). In addition, the Registrar will be responsible for the issuance of authorizations to import (when these sections of the law come into force).

The Chief Firearms Officers

The Chief Firearms Officer has the legislative authority for the administration of the *Firearms Act* and its regulations in a particular province or territory.¹⁷

¹⁷ Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces (excluding Newfoundland and Labrador) are managed by provincially-appointed Chief Firearms Officers. The remaining provinces and territories have opted out of the Program and are managed by federally-appointed Chief Firearms Officers.

Chief Firearms Officers are responsible for approving and revoking a firearm licence based on the firearm owner's eligibility. They also approve or revoke intraprovincial carrier firearms licences, authorizations to transport or carry firearms, shooting club and range approvals, and firearm transfers. They are also responsible for designating instructors for the firearms safety course.

The Chief Firearms Officer is a front-line service to firearm owners, providing essential Program information and assistance. Each jurisdiction is responsible for its own organizational structure and may include Firearms Officers, Provincial Firearms Officers and Area and Local Firearms Officers.

The Program's Other Federal Partners

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is currently responsible for housing and maintaining the Program's technical platform, which resides on the National Police Services Network (NPSN). The RCMP provides specialized applications that support the Program and maintain the essential interfaces between the Canadian Firearms Registration System and the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) applications.

The RCMP Forensic Laboratory, Firearms Section, provides firearms technical support to the Registrar on firearm classifications and firearm descriptions. The Canadian Police Information Centre Services Branch provides an auditing service for the CPIC application used by Program administrators. The Departmental Security Branch of the RCMP ensures that security standards of both the technical and physical components of the Program are maintained.

Canada Customs and Revenue Agency

The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) administers all aspects of the movement of firearms into and out of Canada. This includes confirming firearm declarations (which are deemed licences and registrations) when firearms are brought into the country by non-residents. The Agency also works with the enforcement communities to control the illegal movement of firearms. In the future, this Agency will also confirm authorizations to import firearms.

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) issues import and export permits for firearms entering and leaving Canada. The Department also works with the enforcement communities to control the illegal movement of firearms.

Annex C – The Processing Centres

The Central Processing Site

The Central Processing Site (CPS) in Miramichi, New Brunswick, consists of two basic components: the processing component which deals primarily with the processing of licensing and registration applications (mail handling, data capture, image scanning, printing and distribution of licence cards), and the call centre component that responds to calls for assistance and information and administers transfers of firearms. On average, over one million calls are received annually at the call centre.

The Quebec Processing Site

The Quebec Processing Site (QPS) in Montreal, Quebec falls under the responsibility of the Chief Firearms Officer of the province of Quebec. This site processes all licence applications for individuals who reside within the province of Quebec (registration applications are processed at the Central Processing Site). The Quebec Processing Site also manages its own call centre which provides assistance and guidance to Quebec residents and data captures and approves firearm transfers.

The Outsourced Processing Site

The Outsourced Processing Site (OPS) in Ottawa, Ontario, was originally conceived as a short-term means of enhancing overall capacity for processing licensing applications. Given the success of this operation, the Outsourced Processing Site was kept on to provide a similar service to process the large number of registration applications that were received following the mail outs of personalized application forms to licensed firearm owners across Canada.

Annex D – The Computerized Systems

Several computerized systems support the Program's work. These applications are stand-alone systems that were designed in support of the *Firearms Act*, or are existing RCMP applications that have been linked to provide firearms information to police agencies across Canada. The RCMP National Police Services Network is the technical infrastructure that supports all systems. The RCMP Departmental Security Branch and the Informatics Branch provide security and technical support to Program partners.

Canadian Firearms Registration System

As part of its mandate to deliver the Canadian Firearms Program, the Canada Firearms Centre developed a comprehensive computer system entitled the Canadian Firearms Registration System (CFRS). The CFRS is a fully integrated, automated information system that provides administrative and enforcement support to all partners involved in the licensing of firearm owners and the registration of firearms. A subset of the data contained in the CFRS is made available to all policing agencies through the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC). The information technology branch of the RCMP maintains the CFRS technical platform.

Canadian Police Information Centre

The Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system is an RCMP computerized system that contains a database of tactical information on crimes, criminals and issues affecting public safety. The CPIC system is a national information-sharing system in Canada that links criminal justice and law enforcement partners. The computerized database, which has been operational since July 1972, is accessible to accredited law enforcement agencies across Canada.

The CPIC application maintains an interface with the CFRS application for three key areas:

- New Firearms Program Clients (people) – all new licence applicants are queried against the CPIC system to ensure no public safety risks are flagged. The system also maintains details on persons prohibited from possessing firearms.
- New CPIC Entries (people) – any new entry to the CPIC system (a person considered a public safety risk) is queried against the CFRS database, to ensure that those in possession of firearms who are considered a safety risk are immediately brought to the attention of a Chief Firearms Officer.
- Firearms (property) – the CPIC system maintains a property repository where the enforcement community can log lost, missing or stolen firearms. All new firearms entered in the CFRS are queried against the CPIC property file. Similarly, all new firearms with serial numbers that are entered into the CPIC system are queried against the CFRS database. If a query identifies a matching firearm, the police agency that maintains the firearm record is notified.

Accreditation System

The Accreditation System creates a link between the CFRS and CPIC applications. All new firearm licence applicants are queried against the CPIC system to ensure they present no threat or risk to public safety. The accreditation software retrieves data on these new applicants from CFRS, creates a file to send to CPIC and retrieves the results of the query from CPIC to send back to CFRS. The

application was created not only to support the eligibility of the applicant, but also to handle and manage the high volumes of queries against CPIC that occurred when high volumes of applications were received prior to the licensing deadline.

Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line

The Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line (CFRO) is a subset of the Canadian Firearms Registration System. The system is available to Canadian police agencies via the CPIC system to assist them when responding to calls and in performing investigations. The system was designed to enhance public safety and to enforce the weapons provision found in Part III of the *Criminal Code*.

As a searchable application, police officers may query firearms-related information such as the serial number or registration certificate number of a firearm, or the name, address and firearm licence number of an individual. With the completion of the licensing phase and the end of the registration phase, CFRO provides the police with immediate access to the information they need in their investigational and operational activities. Ongoing support is provided to law enforcement agencies on a case-by-case basis.

Police Information Retrieval System

The Police Information Retrieval System (PIRS) is an RCMP information management system that is used by all detachments within the RCMP, as well as some municipal police agencies, to maintain local records specific to each police service. The data within the PIRS application relates to all aspects of policing operations and is accessible across Canada. Relevant data is migrated to the Firearms Interest Police (FIP) file in the CPIC system through an automated interface. The data is reviewed by the Chief Firearms Officers to determine the eligibility of individuals applying for or in possession of a firearm licence.

A number of measures have been initiated to increase the quality and accuracy of the data entered into the PIRS. A validation and disclosure process has been implemented, system level edits have been developed and data quality reviews have been put into practice to monitor progress and compliance. User workshops and training are supplementing these changes and promoting awareness and accountability.

Firearms Interest Police

The Firearms Interest Police (FIP) database is one of several in the Persons File of the CPIC investigation databank. The majority of the entries to FIP are made by extract programs directly from the major incident reports systems of police agencies, such as the Police Information Retrieval System (PIRS) for the RCMP and the Ontario Municipal Provincial Police Automation Cooperative (OMPPAC) for the province of Ontario. If a police agency does not maintain such an interface, it can enter information into the FIP database using the CPIC application. The FIP database provides relevant information to the Canadian Firearms Program on individuals who may present a risk to themselves or to others.

Firearms Reference Table

The Firearms Reference Table (FRT) was developed by the RCMP to help accurately identify firearms. It is an automated encyclopaedic research tool available nationally and internationally. The FRT was designed as a tool for domestic and international policing, import and export controls, firearms

tracking and counter-terrorism initiatives. It provides narrative and graphic information relating to the description, technical identification and legal classification of firearms. The FRT is considered the reference standard for firearm descriptions for the exchange of information between police agencies in Canada and by government agencies internationally. The application is managed by the RCMP Forensic Laboratory.

The Restricted Weapon Registration System (RWRS)

Prior to December 1, 1998, only firearms classified as restricted or prohibited were subject to registration. The Canadian Firearms Registry managed this manually-recorded database under the authority of the RCMP. In 1981, an automated tool known as the Restricted Weapon Registration System (RWRS) was established. This system would become the electronic repository for registration records of restricted and prohibited weapons.

On December 1, 1998, the new registration database, the Canadian Firearms Registration System (CFRS), was implemented. From that point on, no new records were entered into the RWRS application. The *Firearms Act* provided a transitional period during which restricted or prohibited firearms previously registered in RWRS would remain valid until December 31, 2002. During this transitional period, owners were required to re-register their restricted or prohibited firearms. This newly validated registration data was entered into CFRS and new registration certificates were issued.

Data remaining in RWRS, some dating back to the early 1930s, will be maintained. This data will be accessible for historical reference, on-going analysis and to assist when conducting traces.

Annex E – Licensing

Types of Licences for Individuals

To be compliant with the *Firearms Act*, firearm owners and users must have a valid firearm licence. There are currently five valid types of licences within the Canadian Firearms Program: Possession-Only Licence, Possession and Acquisition Licence, Minor's Licence, Firearms Acquisition Certificate and Non-Resident Temporary Borrowing Licence.

Possession-Only Licence

Possession-Only Licences (POLs) allow individuals to continue to possess the firearms that were in their possession on December 1, 1998 and allow the purchase of ammunition. While holders of POLs may renew their licences when they expire, no new applications for this type of licence have been accepted since January 1, 2001. A POL is valid for a five-year period.

Possession and Acquisition Licence

To possess and acquire firearms under the *Firearms Act*, an individual must have a Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL). This licence replaced the former Firearms Acquisition Certificate. A PAL is valid for five years.

Minor's Licence

A minor is a person who is at least 12 years old but who is not 18 years old. Minors may only hold a firearm licence for non-restricted firearms and may only use non-restricted firearms. They are not permitted to acquire or register any firearm. Minors must have the consent of a parent or legal guardian to be eligible for a firearm licence.

Firearms Acquisition Certificate

Prior to December 1998, a Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC) was required to acquire a firearm. When the *Firearms Act* came into effect on December 1, 1998, the FAC was replaced by the Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL). A transitional provision within the *Firearms Act* deemed that an FAC would be considered a valid PAL until such time as it expired. Like a PAL, an FAC was valid for five years from its date of issuance.

Non-Resident Temporary Borrowing Licence

Non-residents over 17 years of age may apply for a non-resident temporary borrowing licence for non-restricted firearms. This licence allows the holder to borrow non-restricted firearms for a period of 60 days while in Canada. To be eligible for this licence, the applicant must have a sponsor. This licence is issued by the Chief Firearms Officer under the authority of the *Firearms Act*.

The Licensing Process for Individuals

To obtain a Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) an individual must complete an application form.

Applicants must include information on their current and former spouses or common-law partners when applying for a firearm licence. Spouses and common-law partners are given the opportunity to acknowledge their awareness of the application by signing the form. If an application form is received unsigned, the Chief Firearms Officer has the responsibility of informing the spouse or common-law partner of the application.

Applicants must also provide two references, proof of identity, along with a photograph of themselves that has been signed by a person who can vouch for their identity. Applicants must also provide proof that they have passed the Canadian Firearms Safety Course or have their Chief Firearms Officer's certification that they meet the course requirements.

The Chief Firearms Officer conducts police background and reference checks on every applicant. This is to ensure there is no public safety risk for the person to possess or acquire firearms. A continuous eligibility feature is built into the licensing system that automatically monitors police files. If a safety issue is noted, appropriate investigative action is taken which could result in a firearm owner's licence being revoked and firearms removed.

If a firearm licence is required for employment purposes, applicants can identify this requirement on their application forms. These applications are given a priority processing in order to ensure that employment is not jeopardized.

Once an application has been received, a 28-day waiting period is in effect for first-time applicants for a PAL.

All firearm licences carry specific conditions or privileges. Licence privileges reflect the class of firearm that the licence holder may possess or acquire, i.e., non-restricted, restricted or prohibited firearms. Fees charged to process an application are based on the privileges that the applicant is requesting. The fees for a Possession and Acquisition Licence are \$60 for non-restricted firearms and \$80 for restricted and prohibited firearms.

The licence holder must maintain his or her eligibility to keep the licence. Any new information of a criminal or potentially violent nature that is reported on the nationwide police network is automatically sent to the Chief Firearms Officer for review. All information received is examined. When evidence indicates that an individual should no longer hold a licence, the Chief Firearms Officer revokes the licence and notifies the police who take the necessary action.

Types of Licences for Businesses

Business Firearm Licence

The Chief Firearms Officer is authorized to issue a firearms business licence to allow for commercial activities relating to firearms. A business licence application must be accompanied by a certificate of incorporation or other document that legally created the business, and proof of the provincially-registered name and style under which the business operates or would operate.

Businesses (including museums) must have a firearm licence for each location at which they conduct business regulated by the *Firearms Act*. A business' firearm licence is non-transferable. The licence may allow for several activities relating to firearms. The content of a business licence is specified through regulations, and includes:

- a) the activities that a business is allowed to carry out;
- b) the regulated items to which each allowed activity pertains;
- c) all conditions attached to the licence; and
- d) any other information required by the regulations.

Carrier Firearms Licence

Businesses whose main activity is transportation and that are involved in the transportation of firearms, prohibited ammunition, restricted or prohibited weapons, or prohibited devices are required to have a Carrier Firearms Licence. There are three categories of carrier licences: International and Inter-provincial (which are issued by the Registrar), and Intra-provincial, which are issued by the Chief Firearms Officer of the province in which the carrier will transport. Carrier Firearms Licences are valid for one year.

Business Activities

A business firearm licence may allow for several activities. In 2002, a total of 7,891 firearm-related business activities were allocated to 4,326 licensed businesses in all provinces and territories.¹⁸

TABLE 8:
Number of
businesses by
activity in each
province or
territory

ACTIVITY	AB	BC	MB	NB	NL	NS	NT	NU	ON	PE	QC	SK	YT	TOT
Ammunition (sale)	322	350	176	158	333	187	39	45	830	26	863	332	12	3,673
Auction	7	10	5	2	0	3	0	0	11	0	0	3	1	42
Display of firearms	0	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	11
Entertainment	5	39	6	0	0	6	0	2	17	1	4	0	0	80
Gunsmith	55	93	31	31	21	53	1	1	205	5	157	37	2	692
Manufacturing	16	33	3	0	0	6	0	1	41	2	13	0	0	115
Museum	13	10	4	5	6	7	1	0	26	2	5	7	1	87
Pawned firearms	8	12	9	1	0	0	0	0	6	0	5	14	0	55
Possession	22	26	7	10	4	23	2	0	323	3	67	11	1	499
Retail/Wholesale	138	161	61	67	46	75	27	45	307	9	318	83	7	1,344
Storing firearms	62	69	18	12	6	27	3	2	128	7	121	31	4	490
Other	57	85	21	3	7	3	7	6	408	0	164	40	2	803
Total	705	889	344	292	423	390	80	102	2,302	55	1,720	559	30	7,891

¹⁸ See Annex H for definitions of the business activities.

Annex F – Authorizations, Declarations and Permits

One of the main policy objectives of Canada’s firearms legislation is to combat illicit trafficking and smuggling of firearms. Greater legislative controls over importing and exporting of firearms are included in the *Firearms Act* and new and separate offences for smuggling and trafficking are included in the *Criminal Code*. The Program has supported a number of international initiatives dealing with import, export and transit controls of firearms consistent with Canada’s legislative objectives.

Authorization to Transport

The transport of restricted or prohibited firearms is strictly regulated. An individual who is licenced to possess a prohibited or restricted firearm may only transport this class of firearm if he or she has obtained an authorization under the *Firearms Act*.

An Authorization to Transport (ATT) allows an individual to transport firearms classified as restricted or prohibited between two or more specified locations. This could be to satisfy a short-term move, such as a change of residence for the owner, or long-term transportation, such as the movement of a firearm from a residence to a shooting range repeatedly over a period of time. ATTs are issued under the authority of the Chief Firearms Officer of each province or territory.

Authorization to Carry

An Authorization to Carry (ATC) allows individuals to carry restricted or prohibited firearms, (usually handguns) for the purpose of protection of life or for use in their lawful occupation. The majority of the ATCs are issued to employees of armoured car companies. ATCs are issued under the authority of the Chief Firearm Officer of each province or territory.

Special Authority to Possess

A Special Authority to Possess (SAP) permits the transport of prohibited firearms (other than prohibited handguns defined in section 84, paragraph A of the definition of a prohibited firearm in the *Criminal Code*), to a shooting range, for the purpose of verification or to an event outside of Canada. SAPs are issued by the Chief Firearm Officer of each province or territory.

Non-Resident Declarations

Visitors bringing firearms into Canada must declare their firearms by completing a non-resident declaration before entering the country. A Canada Customs officer confirms the declaration when the visitor crosses the border and declares the firearm. The confirmed declaration serves as a temporary licence and registration certificate for up to 60 days. Non-residents are only allowed to bring non-restricted or restricted firearms into Canada; they cannot bring prohibited firearms into the country. The cost of a non-resident declaration is \$50. Fees for additional confirmations during a 12-month period are waived.

Non-residents may also apply for Canadian firearm licences and may register their firearms in Canada. Licensed non-residents who have registered their firearms may enter Canada without completing a non-resident declaration. These non-residents are normally frequent visitors to Canada for the purposes of hunting or target shooting.

Import and Export Permits

Individuals can import firearms and firearm parts that are not prohibited into Canada without a permit (sections of the *Firearms Act* requiring import permits are not yet in force). An authorization may, however, be required to comply with the laws of another country. For example, under American law, an export permit is required for all permanent exports of firearms, ammunition, and certain firearm parts. United States authorities will not issue an export permit unless they have evidence that Canada will allow these goods to be imported. An International Import Certificate (IIC) issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) will act as the proof required. There is no fee for an IIC.

When the imports and exports provisions of the *Firearms Act* and its supporting regulations are fully in force (proposed for January 1, 2004), individuals will need an authorization for all firearm imports.

Annex G – Registration

By law, firearm owners must have a registration certificate for all their firearms by January 1, 2003. Owners must have a valid firearm licence before they can register a firearm.

A firearm is only registered once by its owner. A registration certificate remains valid until a firearm is transferred to another owner or it is modified in a way that would change its legal classification.

The class of firearm being registered must match the privileges assigned on the applicant's firearms licence. Previously-registered restricted and prohibited firearms must be re-registered. There is no fee for re-registration.

All acquisitions of firearms since December 1, 1998 are considered transfers. Transfer fees were waived from June 10, 2000 to December 31, 2002. After that date, a \$25 transfer processing fee is payable.

Classes of Firearms

The *Firearms Act* recognizes three legal classes of firearms:

Non-restricted firearms

- a rifle, shotgun or combination gun that is not described as being restricted or prohibited.

Restricted firearms

- handgun that is not a prohibited firearm;
- a semi-automatic, centre-fire rifle or shotgun with a barrel length of less than 470 mm (18.5 inches) that is not prohibited;
- a firearm that can fire when its overall length is reduced by folding, telescoping or some other means to less than 660 mm (26 inches); or
- any firearm prescribed as restricted (including some rifles and shotguns).

Prohibited firearms

- a handgun with a barrel length of 105 mm (4.1 inches) or less;
- a handgun designed or adapted to discharge 25 or 32 calibre ammunition. This does not include a handgun that is prescribed for use in international sporting competitions governed by the rules of the International Shooting Union;
- a rifle or shotgun that has been altered to make it less than 660 mm (26 inches) in overall length;
- a rifle or shotgun that has been altered to make the barrel length less than 470 mm (18.5 inches) where the overall firearm length is 660 mm (26 inches) or more;
- automatic firearms and converted automatic firearms; or
- any firearm prescribed as prohibited.

Registration Certificates

Registration certificates are issued following the processing of applications from:

- a) individuals who want to register firearms in their possession on December 1, 1998;
- b) individuals or businesses that manufacture or import firearms;
- c) individuals or businesses that want to transfer firearms to individuals or businesses; and
- d) businesses who want to transfer firearms to public agencies (no certificate is issued when a firearm is transferred from a business to a public agency, however, the transaction is recorded).

Registration of Firearms to Individuals

The *Firearms Act* requires all persons with non-restricted firearms that they possessed on December 1, 1998, to obtain a registration certificate for their firearms prior to January 1, 2003. Non-restricted firearms obtained after December 1, 1998 were subject to immediate registration upon acquisition. The Act also required individuals who had restricted or prohibited firearms registered prior to December 1, 1998, to re-register these same firearms. The deadline for re-registration of these firearms was also January 1, 2003.

The registration process involves the recording of the information that describes a firearm's unique characteristics. The classification of the firearm is determined based on this information. It is then linked to the registrant who must have a valid firearm licence in order to register the firearm. Once the firearm has passed eligibility screening, the final step in the process is the registration of the firearm and the issuance of a registration certificate. A separate registration certificate is issued for each individual firearm.

Registration of Firearms to Businesses

A business must submit an application to register all firearms it has newly manufactured or imported. Applications can be submitted on paper or can be sent electronically using an application provided by the Program entitled the electronic Firearms Registration Application Submission Tool (e-FAST).

A full description of the firearm must be provided so that it can be properly classified. All firearms registered to a business must be examined by an approved firearms verifier who verifies and confirms their description and classification. Businesses are not required to pay a fee to register a firearm.

Annex H – Business Activities

Ammunition: Retail sales, wholesale sales and manufacturing of ammunition.

Auction: Selling at auction.

Display of Firearms: Display or storage of firearms by a Royal Canadian Legion or an organized veterans group of any Canadian armed forces or police force; gun show sponsorship.

Entertainment: For the purpose of theatrical productions or publishing activities, manufacturing or supply or possessing replica firearms or supplying or possessing non-restricted and restricted firearms or prohibited handguns. Also includes supplying to, or possessing for the purposes of, motion picture, video, television or theatrical productions or publishing activities, non-restricted, restricted and prohibited firearms, including prohibited handguns, prohibited devices including replica prohibited weapons.

Gunsmith: Operating the business of gunsmith.

Manufacturing: Manufacture, processing or assembly of firearms; manufacture, processing or assembly of prohibited devices other than replica firearms, prohibited and restricted weapons and prohibited ammunition.

Museum: Museum possessing fewer than 20 firearms in their permanent inventory; museum possessing 20 to 49 firearms in their permanent inventory; museum possessing 50 or more firearms in their permanent inventory.

Pawned Firearms: Taking in pawn.

Possession: Possession by a business whose main activity is handling, transporting or protecting valuables and whose employees require firearms to protect their lives (security guards employed by armoured car industry). This also includes possession of prohibited firearms, weapons, devices or ammunition for any other prescribed purpose under Section 22 of the Firearms Licences Regulations, not covered in the above categories.

Retail/ Wholesale: Retail sales (including consignment); wholesale or retail sales of firearms as an agent.

Storing Firearms: Storage of firearms.

Other: Other reason to possess non-restricted or restricted firearms.