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RCMP



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

COMMISSIONER OF FIREARMS

2 0 0 9 R E P O R T



Royal Canadian Mounted Police Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Canada 

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report describes events and performance measures for the Canadian Firearms Program (CFP) for the calendar year 2009.

As required by the *Firearms Act*, the report of the Commissioner of Firearms is prepared by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Canadian Firearms Program and submitted to Parliament annually via the Minister of Public Safety. Since 2006, when responsibility for the CFP was assigned to the RCMP, the appointment of Commissioner of Firearms has been assigned to the Commissioner of the RCMP.

PROGRAM MISSION AND VALUES

The mission of the RCMP Canadian Firearms Program is to enhance public safety by helping reduce death, injury and threat from firearms. It promotes responsible ownership, use and storage of firearms, and provides law enforcement in Canada and internationally with operational support vital to the prevention and investigation of firearms crime and misuse.

In pursuing its mission, the CFP:

- respects the lawful ownership and use of firearms in Canada and supports firearms clients with quality service, fair treatment and protection of confidential information;
- recognizes that the involvement of firearm owners and users, the provinces, other federal agencies, Aboriginal Peoples, police organizations, safety instructors, verifiers, businesses, and public safety groups is essential for effective program delivery and achieving success;
- commits to ongoing improvement and innovation in order to achieve the highest levels of service, compliance, efficiency, and overall effectiveness;
- informs and engages its clients and stakeholders in reviewing and developing policy, regulations and legislation and in communicating critical information on program requirements and results;
- manages its resources prudently to provide good value for money, and clear and accurate reporting of program performance and resource management; and
- upholds the values and ethical standards of the Public Service of Canada and is committed to fair staffing, employee development and a work environment that encourages involvement and initiative.

INTRODUCTION

PRIORITIES

Safe Homes and Safe Communities

Aligned with both the Government of Canada and the RCMP's commitment to *Safe Homes and Safe Communities*, the CFP's goal is to enhance public safety by:

- providing police and other law enforcement organizations with operational and technical support and expertise vital to the prevention and investigation of firearms crime; and
- reducing firearms-related death and injury in Canadian communities by promoting and controlling safe and responsible firearms ownership, use and storage.

Shared Strategic Priorities

The CFP also shares in the RCMP's commitment to addressing four strategic priorities:

1. **Organized Crime**: The CFP collaborates with law enforcement in investigating and reducing the trafficking of firearms supported by organized crime groups. Experienced firearms investigators work with both domestic and international partners to dismantle criminal groups, often relying on firearms-focused analytical data produced by the CFP. This helps disrupt organized crime by allowing investigators to observe criminal firearms patterns within a community or across the country.
2. **Terrorism**: The CFP is actively involved in addressing firearms-related smuggling and cross-border issues, recognizing illegally obtained firearms as a potential tool for terrorists. Key international commitments include participation in the Canada-U.S. Cross Border Crime Forum, contributions to Canada's efforts at the United Nations and work with INTERPOL to combat the trafficking of illicit firearms.
3. **Youth**: Individuals younger than 18 are not permitted to own firearms, however, they may obtain a licence that will allow them to borrow non-restricted firearms for purposes such as hunting and target shooting. The CFP promotes the safe storage, handling and use of firearms for all owners and users and recognizes the value of focusing communication and outreach efforts on firearms safety awareness for youth.
4. **Aboriginal Communities**: The CFP remains committed to engaging and financially supporting Aboriginal communities on firearms-related projects at national, regional and local levels. Both individual and community safety are enhanced through the provision of firearms-safety education and training as well as verification, licensing and registration assistance. As always, the CFP is committed to researching and pursuing new initiatives and strengthening partnerships in Canada's Aboriginal communities.

INTRODUCTION

Canada's International Commitments Involving Firearms

Canada is committed to international peace and security and, in partnership with a number of other countries, maintains a commitment to developing, signing and ratifying treaties which address firearms control. In an effort to reduce trafficking of firearms and other commodities used in multinational crime, Canada has joined other members of the Organization of American States as well as the United Nations as signatories to treaties that require controls on firearms.

Strategic Policy Development and Research

At the federal level, firearms are regulated primarily by the *Firearms Act* and by Part III of the *Criminal Code*. The *Firearms Act* and its associated Regulations set out the rules for possessing a firearm, while the *Criminal Code* and its associated Regulations identify and classify various firearms, weapons and devices. Both the *Criminal Code* and the *Firearms Act* contain offences and penalties for illegal possession or misuse of a firearm.

The Firearms Strategic Policy Section of the CFP advises the Commissioner on firearms policy, legislation and regulations and represents the CFP on interdepartmental, provincial, federal and international (Organization of American States and United Nations) committees and working groups involving firearms-policy issues. They are also relied upon to apply their program knowledge and expertise when amendments to the *Criminal Code*, *Firearms Act* and associated Regulations, firearms policy or operational procedure are being considered.

The Research Section of the CFP is also instrumental in firearms policy development. They focus on expanding and improving firearms research databases in an effort to improve program and service delivery and facilitate partner activity, cooperation and collaboration, devoting considerable attention to Aboriginal communities. Their research efforts, in line with those of other CFP sections, are also intended to support and assist front-line police officers across Canada.



Firearms Seized by Police

HISTORY OF FIREARMS CONTROL IN CANADA

Prior to the implementation of the *Criminal Code* in 1892, firearms control was the responsibility of Justices of the Peace. They had the authority to impose a six-month jail term on anyone carrying a handgun if the person did not have reasonable cause to fear assault against life or property. The *Criminal Code* required individuals to have a basic permit - known as a "certificate of exemption" - to carry a pistol unless the owner had cause to fear assault or injury. This first *Criminal Code* made it an offence to sell a pistol to anyone under 16 years of age and required vendors who sold pistols or air guns to keep a record of the purchaser's name, the date of the sale and information that could identify the firearm.

The first official registration requirement for handguns was created in 1934. This led to the centralization of the handgun registry in 1951 and the addition of automatic firearms to the list of firearms requiring registration. In 1969, the categories of "firearm," "restricted weapon," and "prohibited weapon" were created, as was the requirement that each restricted weapon have a separate registration certificate. Firearms-licensing legislation (*Bill C-51*) passed in 1977 resulted in the first general screening process for prospective firearm owners. In 1991, many of the 1977 measures were strengthened when *Bill C-17* was introduced. These more stringent and detailed screening procedures included:

- a mandatory 28-day waiting period prior to issuance of a licence;
- increased penalties for firearm-related crimes;
- clear regulations for safe storage, handling, and transportation; and
- the requirement to demonstrate knowledge of the safe handling of firearms.

Police, including the RCMP, have played a major role in firearms control in Canada, including management of the original handgun registration, and eventually the Restricted Weapons Registration System (RWRS). The RCMP-run RWRS listed most handguns and other types of firearms deemed to present a higher risk to public safety. The RWRS was eventually decommissioned, but the legacy information remains in the custody of the RCMP.

In 1993, the Government of Canada indicated its intention to proceed with a national licensing system for firearms owners and a universal registration system that would apply to all firearms. *Bill C-68: An Act Respecting Firearms and Other Weapons* was tabled before Parliament on February 14, 1995, and received Royal Assent on December 5, 1995. This legislation requires:

- individuals to hold a valid licence to either possess or acquire a firearm and ammunition;
- businesses to possess a valid licence if they are to engage in activities related to firearms, other weapons, devices, and/or ammunition; and
- the registration of every firearm.

A transition period allowed for gradual implementation of the Act. Individuals had until January 1, 2001, to obtain a firearm licence and until January 1, 2003, to register firearms.

The Government created the Canada Firearms Centre (CAFC) in 1996 to oversee and administer the *Firearms Act*. After being transferred to the RCMP in 2006, the CAFC continued to focus on support to domestic police, law-enforcement agencies and international organizations by providing information and expertise related to firearms registration and the licensing of individuals and businesses under the *Firearms Act*.

INTRODUCTION

Until June 2008, the CAFC was a service line within the RCMP's National Police Services. CAFC service delivery to businesses and individuals comprised the Firearms Registry, the Licensing Directorate and the Operations Directorate, which included the Central Processing Site in Miramichi, New Brunswick.

In June 2008, the CAFC and the RCMP's Firearms Support Services Directorate were brought together to form an integrated entity called the RCMP Canadian Firearms Program. The Firearms Support Services Directorate (now called the Firearms Investigative & Enforcement Services Directorate) comprises several firearms-focused groups that provide direct operational support to front-line police officers across Canada. The CFP became part of the RCMP Policing Support Services business line at the same time.

This amalgamation strategically enhanced the CFP's capacity and effectiveness and created a sharper focus on support to law enforcement. The CFP works directly with front-line police officers by supporting, guiding and informing them in firearms-related investigations. The CFP's active role in addressing the illegal movement and criminal use of firearms both in Canada and internationally strengthens the ability of law enforcement and criminal justice partners to make Canadian communities safer.

The CFP continues to oversee the administration of the *Firearms Act*. This includes keeping records of the safety training, security screening and licensing of firearms users and the registration and reporting of all firearms. In this way, it promotes and increases firearms knowledge and safety awareness and provides Canadian police with current information on where firearms are likely to be encountered.



INTRODUCTION

CFP LOCATIONS

The CFP has offices and representatives in all provinces and territories across Canada.

The Director General and staff are located in Ottawa, as is the Strategic Integration and Program Management Services Directorate, the Licensing, Registration and Technical Services Directorate as well as a portion of the Firearms Investigative and Enforcement Services Directorate.

The National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (NWEST) is the operational component of the CFP, coordinated through an office in Mississauga, Ontario. Other components of NWEST are co-located with municipal and provincial police services and RCMP contract divisions across the country.

Individual and business licensing and registration applications are received and processed at the national call centre and the Central Processing Site located in Miramichi, New Brunswick. The screening of firearms applicants in order to verify their eligibility to possess and use firearms is also done here.

Chief Firearms Officer operations are located within each province, with Nunavut, Yukon and Northwest Territories under the leadership of the Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia CFOs, respectively.

CFP legal advice is provided by the Department of Justice in Ottawa, Edmonton and St. John's.



CFP PARTNERS

The CFP works effectively with a number of partner agencies.

Canadian Law Enforcement

The CFP works with, provides information to and offers firearms-related support to police groups across Canada. CFP representatives from across the country assist front-line police officers in investigations involving the illegal movement and criminal use of firearms. They provide firearms tracing, identification and disposal services as well as hands-on firearms training and prosecution assistance. Canadian law enforcement groups also rely on the CFP for firearms analytical data which can identify trends, suspected criminals and smuggling routes and therefore provide a comprehensive picture of the criminal use of firearms in Canada.

Information provided to the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) by police across the country is recorded in the Firearms Interest Police database. It helps identify people who should not have access to firearms for public-safety reasons. The Canadian Firearms Registry Online, which police can access through CPIC, provides critical information about the presence of registered firearms and their licensed owners. This information helps police assess risks when responding to calls, distinguish between legal and illegal firearms, trace the source of registered firearms found at crime scenes and identify and return stolen and lost firearms to their owners.



Canadian Law Enforcement Partners

International Law Enforcement

The CFP has well-established working relationships with international police agencies and shares a commitment with the United States to preventing the illegal cross-border movement of firearms.

INTRODUCTION

The CFP co-chairs a committee at the annual Cross Border Crime Forum which unites law enforcement and justice officials from Canada and the United States in order to focus attention on trans-national crime issues such as smuggling and organized crime.

The CFP also hosts international firearms trafficking conferences which typically draw law enforcement participants from across Canada and the U.S., and have attracted participants from as far away as South Africa, Bosnia, St. Vincent, Japan and China.

In 2006, information-exchange protocols between Canada and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE) were established. These allow each country to exchange firearms trace information electronically and have resulted in a diminished error rate in tracing submissions as well a decrease in time required to receive trace results.

CFP INTEGRATED POLICE OPERATIONS

CFP Partners with BATFE and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)

A long-term investigation involving BATFE and CBSA identified several subjects suspected of being firearms traffickers and “straw purchasers” (individuals who knowingly purchase firearms on behalf of someone who is prohibited from acquiring firearms). When the suspects were stopped at a border crossing, ten handguns were located in their vehicle. CFP NWest members were consulted and provided assistance by identifying and helping to trace the firearms and providing clear guidance regarding applicable charges.

Public Safety Canada

The Minister of Public Safety has overall responsibility for the RCMP and the Canadian Firearms Program. The CFP works with Public Safety Canada to keep the Minister, parliamentarians and senior government officials informed on matters relating to firearms.

Provinces and Territories

Most provinces are represented by law enforcement members who are seconded to the RCMP and work for the CFP’s Firearms Investigative and Enforcement Services Directorate. This integration of municipal, provincial and federal police officers constitutes a united national effort to address firearms crimes and misuse.

Chief Firearms Officers are responsible for issuing firearms licences to businesses and individuals. The *Firearms Act* and supporting Regulations give them the authority to refuse to issue a licence or to revoke a licence if a public-safety risk is identified. Within their jurisdictions, Chief Firearms Officers also oversee the delivery of safety training, approve shooting ranges and clubs, issue authorizations to transport and carry restricted and prohibited firearms, and conduct inspections.

INTRODUCTION

Canada Border Services Agency

Canada Border Services Agency is responsible for assessing and confirming non-resident firearms declarations, collecting applicable fees and administering other applicable provisions of the *Firearms Act* and related legislation. This involves determining the classification of imported firearms, establishing the destination and purpose for importing the firearms, screening imported firearms and ammunition, assessing the eligibility of the importer and ensuring all firearms are transported safely and in accordance with Canadian law. In situations involving firearms of a unique or ambiguous nature, CBSA often consults the CFP for its specialized firearms expertise.



Items Seized by Canada Border Services Agency

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

The CFP advises the Minister of Public Safety and works with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) on Canada's international commitments regarding firearms, ensuring these commitments reflect the country's domestic priorities and capacity to implement them. The CFP and DFAIT also work together to ensure importers are aware of and meet their obligations as set out in the *Firearms Act*. DFAIT is responsible for issuing the permits which are necessary to import and export firearms under the *Export and Import Permits Act*.

Department of Justice Canada

The Minister of Justice is responsible for the *Criminal Code*, including Part III (Firearms and Other Weapons). The Department of Justice also provides legal and policy advice as well as drafting and litigation services to the CFP.

Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

The CFP advises Aboriginal land claims negotiators on firearms legislation and related issues. Several of these negotiations are ongoing, involving multi-departmental collaboration among subject experts.

CFP INTEGRATED POLICE OPERATIONS

CFP Firearms Registry Plays Key Role in Collaborative Investigation

CFP NWEST received a call from another police agency seeking guidance in applying certain offence sections of the *Firearms Act*. They had received information about an individual conducting illegal firearms business on the Internet, and provided the CFP with the make and model of the firearms in question as well as the suspect's surname.

NWEST queried the Canadian Firearms Registry Online with this information and found an individual who resided in the jurisdiction had previously registered 18 newly imported firearms of the same make and model. This same person was advertising on the Internet to sell these firearms to other individuals and businesses.

Shortly after an investigation was initiated, CBSA intercepted a shipment of 30 firearms of the same make and model by the same individual. The 18 registration certificates issued to the individual were revoked, a decision later upheld by the provincial court in Ontario.

As a result of this collaboration between the CFP, CBSA, and another police force, the subject was convicted and received a 10-year firearms prohibition.



Huge Cache of Seized Replica Firearms

Replica firearms are not real firearms, but were designed to look exactly or almost exactly like real firearms. They are regulated under the *Firearms Act*.

2009 HIGHLIGHTS

PUBLIC AGENTS FIREARMS REGULATIONS

The *Public Agents Firearms Regulations* came into force on October 31, 2008, and legally obligate all public sector agencies, including law enforcement agencies, police academies, and federal, provincial or municipal agencies, to report all “agency” (owned by the agency) and “protected” (seized, turned in or found by police) firearms in their possession.

This firearms-reporting requirement supports Canada’s commitment to combating the illicit trafficking of firearms by creating a comprehensive, centralized and accessible database on firearms, including those in the possession of government and police agencies. This increases the effectiveness and efficiency of multi-jurisdictional investigations.

TABLE 1
Canadian Public Service Agencies*
in Possession of Firearms 2009

Agency Type	Number
Court	109
Federal Agency	226
Municipal Agency	35
Police Academy	4
Police Agencies/ Detachments	899
Provincial Agency	222
TOTAL	1,495

TABLE 2
Public Service Agency Firearms as Reported
Through the *Public Agents Firearms Regulations*
2009

Categories	Number
Agency Firearms	125,056
Destroyed	10,871
Protected Firearms	71,311
TOTAL	207,238

**The numbers represent individual reporting agencies in possession of firearms. In some instances, this can be an entire police force, while in other cases, it may represent a single detachment of a larger police force, such as the RCMP.*

CFP IN ACTION

Public safety is the CFP’s first priority. The regulation of firearms is designed to create an atmosphere of accountability: individuals know they are accountable for their firearm and its use. This is intended to decrease the likelihood that an individual will misuse, traffic or commit a crime with it, as the firearm can be traced back to them. Continuous eligibility checks of firearms licence holders can also prevent firearm misuse by identifying and dealing with potential public safety risks among firearms licence holders before serious misuse occurs.

When necessary, the CFP provides a variety of direct assistance to police in all stages of firearms investigations. Police officers can rely on the help available from CFP firearms experts in the preparation of warrants, the tracing or identification of a crime firearm, the organization of exhibits or the preparation of evidence for court.

The following examples illustrate the services and support the CFP offers:

CFP IN ACTION

CFP Provides Police with Investigative Information

A municipal police service contacted **CFP NWEST** for assistance in preparing and executing a warrant after receiving confidential-source information about the location of three shotguns, a machine pistol and a 9mm handgun. With the **CFP's** guidance and assistance, the warrant was prepared and executed, and a total of nine firearms were located: a machine gun, a 9mm handgun and seven shotguns. The handgun was later **traced and identified** by the **CFP** as having been stolen in another city and province eight years earlier.

CFP Provides Important Suspect Information to Police

In response to a request for assistance from a municipal police agency, **CFP NWEST** conducted checks to determine the firearms licensing and registration status of a subject who had barricaded himself inside his residence. **Canadian Firearms Registry Online** showed the subject had a valid firearms licence and four long guns registered to him. This information was relayed to investigators on the scene outside the subject's residence and allowed them to make a better-informed decision. Police subsequently entered the residence with heightened caution and recovered five firearms - four registered to the individual and one registered to a relative.

Registry Provides Police with Crucial Safety Information

Police received a call from a concerned family at their residence, seeking assistance in taking away a family member's firearms as he was depressed and despondent. Officers located a number of long guns, and queried **Canadian Firearms Registry Online** before leaving with them. They discovered there were an additional 21 firearms registered to the individual that no other family members were aware of. The officers remained on site until they obtained a search warrant, proceeded with the search and found the additional 21 firearms hidden in various parts of the house, along with 45,000 rounds of ammunition.



2009 HIGHLIGHTS

FIREARMS COMPLIANCE INCENTIVES

In 2009, the Minister of Public Safety announced the extension of changes intended to encourage compliance among firearm owners and improve client service for lawful firearm owners. The incentives, which have been further extended to May 16, 2011, include:

- continuation of the fee waiver for firearms licence renewals or upgrades;
- continuation of the amnesty that allows individuals with expired licences or those in possession of unregistered non-restricted firearms to take steps to register these firearms without risk of prosecution; and
- an opportunity for eligible holders of expired Possession Only Licences (POL) to apply for a new POL.



FRONT-LINE LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES OFFERED

Firearms Investigative & Enforcement Services Directorate

The Firearms Investigative & Enforcement Services Directorate was established to support front-line law enforcement in investigating and prosecuting persons involved in the illegal movement and criminal use of firearms.

National Weapons Enforcement Support Team

CFP NWEST comprises police officers, spread across the country, providing support to front-line investigators dealing with the illegal movement of firearms into and within Canada and their subsequent criminal use. This support plays a vital role in the fight against organized crime and terrorism. NWEST services are available to police 24/7 and include:

- direct investigative support to front-line police;
- firearms tracing;
- firearms classification and identification;
- crime gun analysis;
- assistance with the development and execution of warrants;
- assistance in prosecution, through advice and expert witnesses, of firearms cases; and
- firearms-related training for law enforcement agencies.

Specialized Firearms Support Services

The Specialized Firearms Support Services section includes the Firearms Reference Table and the Mobile Service Delivery Vehicle program.

Firearms Reference Table

The CFP's Firearms Reference Table (FRT) is a comprehensive single-source firearms reference computer database, currently exceeding 130,000 records. It establishes a systematic and standard method of identifying and describing firearms. This improves accuracy in import-export controls, detection of stolen firearms and tracing, international communications involving trans-national crime, record keeping/inventory and the determination of the legal classification of a firearm. The FRT database is made available to all police and regulatory agencies in Canada - as well as international police services - through a variety of technologies.

The CFP's FRT unit is recognized as the centre of expertise in the identification and classification of firearms in Canada and is frequently called upon to provide firearms technical advice.

CFP INTEGRATED POLICE OPERATIONS

FRT and U.S. Law Enforcement

The CFP Firearms Reference Table has received positive feedback from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and a U.S. forensic lab.

The FRT offers users rapid access to current and comprehensive information on firearms. It is designed to help law enforcement officers with domestic and international firearms-tracking and counter-terrorism initiatives by providing them with a database of firearm makes and models to assist in accurate identification and classification. Police use the FRT to identify firearms, to initiate tracing requests and to look up the legal classification of a firearm in order to establish whether an offence has occurred.

The U.S. Bureau recently commended the FRT, noting that it provided the “best information” regarding the differences between the various models of firearms!

Mobile Service Delivery Vehicle

The Mobile Service Delivery Vehicle program is a new initiative that will see qualified CFP firearms personnel in specially outfitted vehicles, stationed or travelling across the country. Personnel will collect information on seized firearms and ammunition and facilitate police and other agency compliance with the requirements of the *Public Agents Firearms Regulations*. For example, units will be equipped with “environmentally certified ammunition burners” to assist in the disposal of large quantities of seized or found ammunition.

In December 2009, the CFP acquired its first Mobile Service Delivery Vehicle unit, which was in use and on display at the 2010 Olympics.



The RCMP CFP Mobile Service Delivery Vehicle Unit will travel across the country, providing environmentally sound firearms and ammunition destruction and disposal to all law enforcement agencies

FRONT-LINE LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

Firearms Operations and Enforcement Support

The Firearms Operations and Enforcement Support Unit provides analytical enforcement support to front-line police in firearms operations and investigations. They gather and analyze information in order to create an accurate and concise picture of firearms trafficking activity across the country. This then allows them to provide “actionable” information which is immediately useable by law enforcement clients and has a direct impact on firearms operations and investigations.

Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre

The Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre (CNFTC) assists all law enforcement agencies throughout Canada in tracing firearms and thereby advancing investigations.

The origin of a crime gun is discovered through the tracing process which outlines the detailed history of the firearm. In 2009, there were **2,283** firearms traced in Canada.

Through protocols established with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the two agencies can exchange trace information electronically. The result is a decreased error rate in tracing submissions and a significant improvement in the time required to receive trace results.

The CNFTC also makes use of the CFP’s Canadian Firearms Information System, the database of all legally registered firearms in Canada. As well, they are a member of INTERPOL and the Integrated Weapons and Explosives Tracking System.



Firearms Seized as Exhibits

CRIME GUN INFORMATION

A crime gun is any firearm which is used or suspected to have been used in a crime, is illegally possessed or has an obliterated serial number. These firearms have a direct impact on police officer and public safety.

The figures in tables 3, 4 and 5 below represent the only crime gun data available in Canada.

TABLE 3
Firearms Recovered 2009

Firearm Type	Number
Non-Crime Gun	5,391
Crime Gun	4,083
Total	9,474

TABLE 4
Crime Guns By Classification 2009

Classification	Number
Antique	1
Deemed Non-Firearm	257
Non-Restricted	1,619
Prohibited	1,133
Restricted	881
Unknown	192
Total	4,083



Variety of Handguns Seized by Police

TABLE 5: Crime Guns Recovered 2009

Crime Gun Type	Number
Air Gun	216
Antique	7
Assault Rifle	12
Bolt Action	1
Combination Gun	11
Derringer	17
Flint	3
Handgun	1
Incomplete	9
Machine Gun	8
Other	47
Pellet Gun	38
Percussion	9
Pistol	1,233
Replica	15
Revolver	536
Rifle	1,097
Sawed-off Rifle	17
Sawed-off Shotgun	66
Shotgun	679
Starters Pistol	9
Submachine Gun	13
Toy Gun	39
Total	4,083

FRONT-LINE LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

CANADIAN FIREARMS REGISTRY ONLINE

The registration of a firearm links that firearm to the licensed owner in the Canadian Firearm Information System (CFIS), as data on both individual firearms licensees and individually registered firearms is contained in this database.

TABLE 6
Number of Firearms Registered to Individuals and Businesses
(2008 and 2009)

Firearm Class	2008	2009	Difference
Non-restricted firearms	6,652,205	6,781,698	129,493
Restricted firearms	450,635	471,718	21,083
Prohibited firearms	210,407	206,088	-4,319
Total	7,313,247	7,459,504	146,257



RCMP Officer Performs Query in Police Vehicle

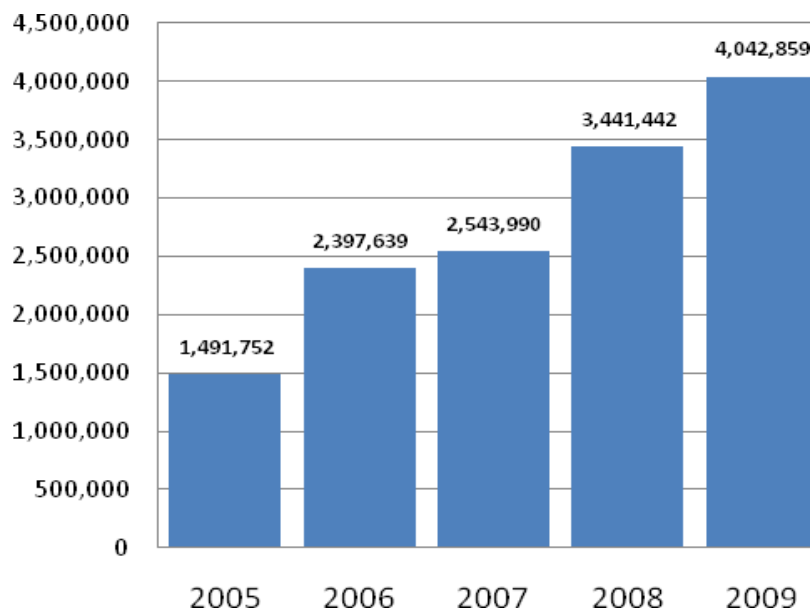
FRONT-LINE LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

The Canadian Firearms Registry Online (CFRO), a subset of CFIS, is available to Canadian police agencies via the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system. This information assists them when responding to calls and conducting investigations.

Police can query the name, address or firearms licence number of an individual or the serial number or registration certificate number of a firearm.

On average, police across Canada queried CFRO **11,076** times per day in 2009. Some of these queries result from police agencies choosing to enable a feature that automatically checks CFRO when a CPIC check is made. However, most police agencies do not automatically check CFRO, and rely on manual queries.

CHART 1
Annual CFRO Queries
(2005 - 2009)



SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

FIREARMS LICENSING

There are three types of firearms licences for individuals in Canada:

- A Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) allows the licence holder to possess and acquire firearms and ammunition.
- A Possession Only Licence (POL) allows the licence holder to possess, but not acquire, firearms and to both possess and acquire ammunition.
- A Minor's Licence is available to persons under 18 years of age who wish to borrow non-restricted firearms for specific activities such as target practice or hunting. Licensed minors cannot acquire firearms.

As previously indicated, a 2009 initiative intended to encourage firearms-licensing compliance offers those with expired POLs the opportunity to apply for a new POL, providing they meet specifically outlined requirements.

The CFP also offers web-based services to clients. Individuals can check the status of their application, change their address or register their firearms through the CFP website.

TABLE 7
Number of Licences Issued By Type (Including Renewals)
(2009)

Licence Type	Total Issued in 2009
Possession and Acquisition Licence	218,983
Possession Only Licence	170,969
Minor's Licence	3,830
Total Issued to Individuals	393,782
Total Issued to Businesses	1,085
Total	394,867

FIREARMS BUSINESS SUPPORT

Under the *Firearms Act*, all businesses and organizations that manufacture, sell, possess, handle, display or store firearms or ammunition are required to have a valid firearms-business licence. All employees who handle firearms for these businesses must also have valid firearms licences. Furthermore, all firearms in a business inventory must be registered after being authenticated by an approved verifier.

Businesses must submit to periodic inspections by a firearms officer to confirm they are storing firearms and conducting business in a safe and lawful manner. As of December 31, 2009, there were **4,720** businesses licensed under the *Firearms Act*, **2,777** of which were licensed to sell ammunition only. This number includes licensed carriers and museums.

The CFP offers businesses the option of performing firearms transfers through the program's web-based services. An Internet transfer of a firearm from a business to an individual can be processed in a few minutes. The related paper registration certificate is sent through the mail and takes approximately one week for delivery.

The *Firearms Act* and associated Regulations set out the safety standards for shooting clubs and ranges, in order to ensure the safety of patrons and the general public. The CFP has published guidelines for ranges, in the interest of promoting safe use. These clubs and ranges are also subject to inspections by the CFP's firearms officers.

LICENCE RENEWALS

Firearms licences for individuals are valid for five years. Licensees must then apply for renewal, a process the CFP has taken steps to streamline. A partially filled renewal application is mailed to the client for completion 90 days prior to licence expiry.

In 2009, the average processing time for a standard firearms licence application in which all the requested information was provided and did not require follow up was **29** days. Because of the need for reference checks and deeper scrutiny of applicants' backgrounds, the average processing time for new Possession and Acquisition Licences (PAL) was **48** days. This includes the mandatory **28**-day waiting period for new PALs.

In 2009, a total of **289,938** licences (POLs and PALs) of individuals with registered firearms required renewal. Many licence holders do not advise the CFP of their address changes and therefore do not receive the renewal reminders and pre-populated application forms.

CHART 2
Average Processing Time for PAL Applications
(2009)

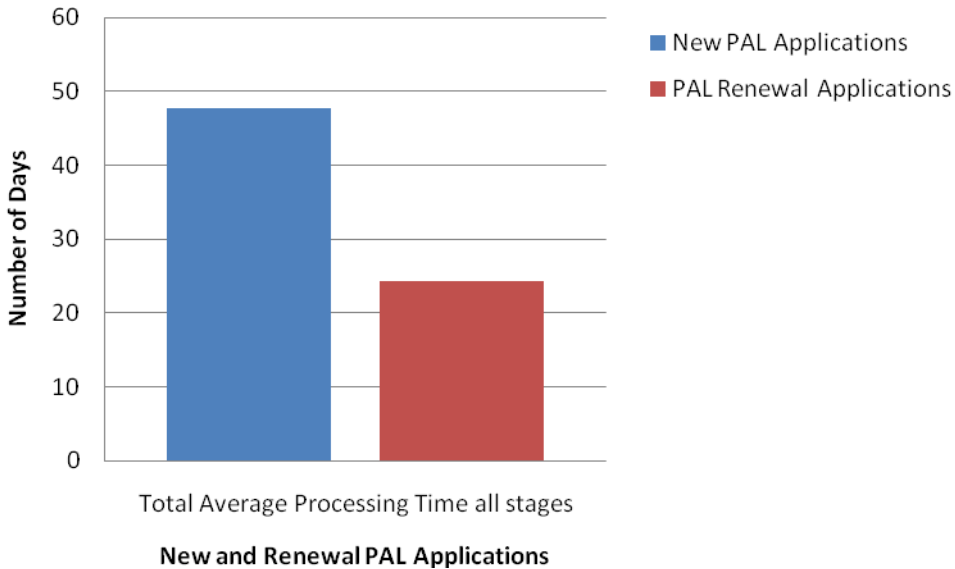


CHART 3
Firearms Licence Renewals (POL & PAL)
(2005 - 2009)



FIREARMS REGISTRATION

The *Firearms Act* requires that all non-restricted, restricted and prohibited firearms in Canada be registered. The registration certificate number links each firearm to its licensed owner in the CFP’s national database, the Canadian Firearms Information System (CFIS). All registered firearms can be traced to their owner through CFIS, providing law enforcement a quick means of tracing recovered/seized firearms or identifying the presence of firearms in a residence or business. A subset of the data contained in CFIS comprises the Canadian Firearms Registry Online (CFRO), which police officers query via CPIC.

FIREARMS REGISTRATION INFORMATION KEY TO PREVENTING AND INVESTIGATING CRIMES

The **CFP** received information regarding an online photo of a youth posing with a firearm. Further checks revealed several similar photos. A **CFRO** query confirmed the individual was a licensed owner of several firearms. The Internet photos illustrated the firearms being handled in an unsafe manner, thereby posing a public safety threat. Furthermore, there was a prohibited weapon in the subject's possession. A public safety warrant was executed on the licensed firearms owner's residence and registered firearms, along with unregistered and prohibited weapons, photographs of which has been placed online, were seized.



At the conclusion of a lengthy investigation which included the execution of a number of *Criminal Code* search warrants, a large quantity of property, including drugs and firearms, was recovered. With the assistance of the **CFP**, the majority of the firearms were traced to their registered owners in Eastern Canada. The information which the **CFP** provided was key in linking the criminal possessors of the firearms to the crimes in which the firearms were obtained.



A man attempted to register four newly purchased hunting rifles but was informed the already-registered firearms had been stolen. **CFRO** information led police to the original owner who confirmed the firearms had been stolen from his residence earlier in the year. Police arrested two males and charged them with trafficking firearms and possession of criminally obtained goods.

SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

TABLE 8
Firearm Registrations (individual and business) by Region
2009

Province/Territory	Non-restricted Firearms	Restricted Firearms	Prohibited Firearms	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	190,971	3,620	1,602	196,193
Prince Edward Island	21,575	1,561	794	23,930
Nova Scotia	284,388	15,342	7,549	307,279
New Brunswick	265,268	11,131	5,458	281,857
Quebec	1,561,791	55,268	34,720	1,651,779
Ontario	2,026,913	173,342	87,297	2,287,552
Manitoba	327,398	16,550	6,387	350,335
Saskatchewan	385,612	23,812	8,474	417,898
Alberta	852,298	80,467	24,437	957,202
British Columbia	790,037	87,289	28,499	905,825
Yukon	22,250	1,605	397	24,252
Northwest Territories	18,229	1,049	324	19,602
Nunavut	10,910	145	38	11,093
Other	24,058	537	112	24,707
Total	6,781,698	471,718	206,088	7,459,504

ASSISTANCE AND INFORMATION OUTREACH TO THE PUBLIC AND POLICE

Outreach activities in 2009 focused on improving public safety by increasing the public's awareness of and compliance with the safe-handling and secure-storage provisions of the *Firearms Act* and associated Regulations. These activities also inform the public on how the CFP works with and assists front-line police and other law enforcement agencies in gathering evidence and investigating people and organizations involved in the illegal movement and criminal use of firearms.

The CFP participated in a number of annual police association meetings such as the Canadian Police Association and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. They also attended hunting and outdoor shows across the country, providing firearms-safety materials and responding to public and police-agency requests for firearms information throughout the year.



The CFP website (www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cfp) is regularly updated to provide accurate and current firearms-related information regarding firearms safety, legislation compliance and client-service initiatives to a wide and varied audience.

The public, when seeking firearms-related information or assistance, is also encouraged to contact the CFP call centre, using the toll-free number (1-800-731-4000) or via e-mail (cfp-pcaf@rcmp-grc.gc.ca).

In 2009, the CFP call centre received **878,608** telephone inquiries. During that same period, the call centre received approximately **14,000** e-mail inquiries including firearms application status checks and requests for information and forms.

To enhance service to police, the CFP also has toll-free telephone lines and e-mail addresses designated for police-only assistance.

CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC SAFETY

FIREARMS-SAFETY TRAINING

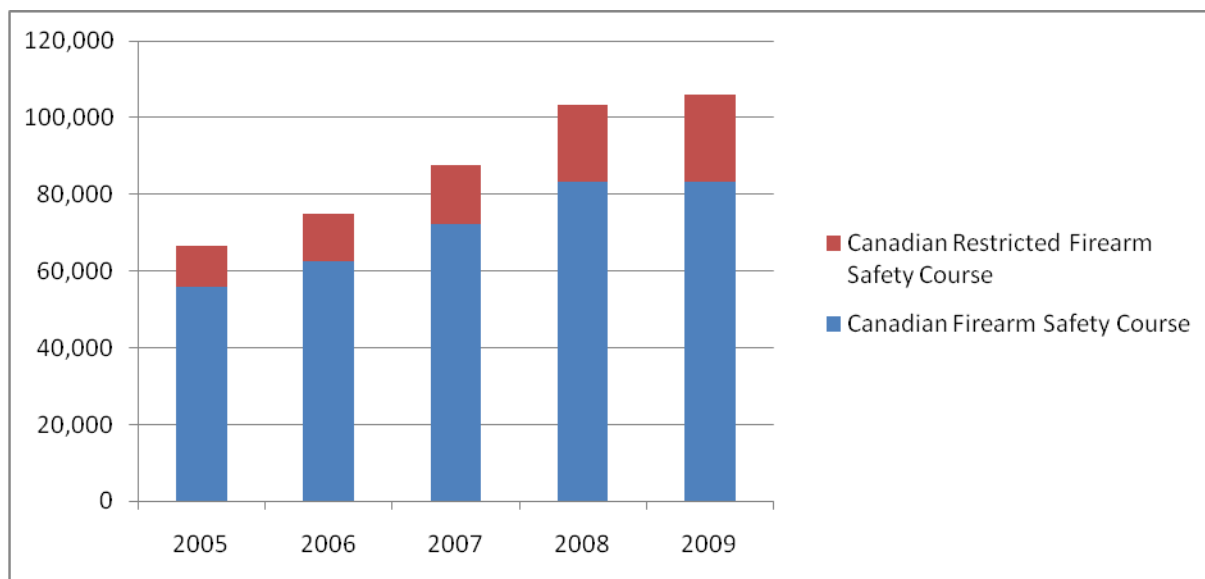
The Canadian Firearms Safety Course (CFSC) is a fundamental firearms-education and safety-training component of the CFP. It was developed in partnership with the provinces and territories as well as organizations with an ongoing interest in hunter education and firearms safety. The CFSC was first implemented in 1994 by the Department of Justice to provide instruction on the safe handling, use, transportation and storage of both restricted and non-restricted firearms.

With the introduction of the *Firearms Act* in 1995, modifications to the firearms-safety training provided to firearms owners and users were required, and a separate firearms-safety training course with a focus on restricted firearms (including handguns) was developed. Both the revised CFSC and the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course (CRFSC) were introduced in 1999.

The Act states that anyone wishing to acquire non-restricted firearms must pass the CFSC test, while anyone wishing to acquire restricted firearms must pass both the CFSC and the CRFSC tests. In 2009, there were **83,287 CFSC graduates** and **22,773** succeeded at the **CRFSC**.

The RCMP CFP is responsible for the continued development, implementation, evaluation and revision of national firearms-safety standards and the CFSC and CRFSC, while each province or territory is responsible for the delivery of the courses.

CHART 4
Firearms-Safety Training (2005-2009)



CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC SAFETY

OUTREACH TO ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The CFP provides firearms services to Aboriginal people and their communities, particularly in remote and rural areas of the country. Always aiming to improve the quality of these services, the CFP has conducted research studies and committed to programs and service-delivery projects with Aboriginal people and communities in mind.

One priority is the integration of the CFP's Canadian Firearms Safety Course into a broader curriculum in reserve schools. Another commitment is the translation of the safety course into Inuktitut so that it can be presented in that language. A third is research into a community-based program for centralized storage of firearms as a method to increase firearms safety within those communities.

The goal of these efforts is to increase public safety in Aboriginal communities by increasing safety awareness among those who have access to firearms.



ENHANCED SCREENING OF FIREARMS-LICENCE APPLICANTS

The CFP makes every effort to ensure individuals who pose a potential public safety risk do not acquire or have access to firearms.

In an effort to reduce firearms violence in Canada, the CFP employs an in-depth security screening process for first-time restricted firearms licence applicants. It includes interviewing the applicant and his or her references, as well as Internet screening.

A recurring trend with firearms crime and violence is pre-event advertisement via the Internet. The CFP therefore proactively searches the Internet to establish leads for police and firearms officers to initiate or assist in investigations and to identify public safety issues prior to crimes being committed.



CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC SAFETY

CONTINUOUS ELIGIBILITY SCREENING OF FIREARMS-LICENCE HOLDERS

All current Possession Only Licences, Possession and Acquisition Licences and Minor's Licences are recorded in the Canadian Firearms Information System (CFIS), which automatically checks with the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) every day to determine whether a licence holder has been the subject of an incident report in CPIC anywhere in Canada.

All matches generate a report entitled Firearms Interest Police (FIP) that is automatically forwarded to the relevant Chief Firearms Officer for follow-up. Some of these reports require no further action, but some prompt a review of the individual's firearms licence, resulting in its revocation and the seizure of any firearms.

This continuous-eligibility screening reduces the likelihood that an individual who has been identified as a potential risk to public safety will be permitted to retain possession of firearms.

TABLE 9
Number of Confirmed FIP Events by Province (2009)

Province/Territory	2009
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,162
Prince Edward Island	162
Nova Scotia	4,684
New Brunswick	3,640
Quebec	35,463
Ontario	21,415
Manitoba	5,155
Saskatchewan	3,501
Alberta	*10,192
British Columbia	9,217
Yukon	245
Nunavut	136
Total	95,972

**Note: Total for Alberta includes confirmed FIP events occurring in the Northwest Territories.*

FIREARMS-LICENCE REFUSALS AND REVOCATIONS

When individuals apply for a firearms licence, they are subject to a variety of background checks. They are screened to identify potential risks to public safety based on the initial application, and their continued eligibility is screened throughout the life of the licence to identify any public-safety risks that may arise over time.

Chief Firearms Officers play a key role in the process of authorizing individuals to acquire or retain a firearms licence. Under the *Firearms Act*, they are authorized to refuse an application for a licence or revoke a firearms licence, based on their assessment of the individual's risk to public safety.

In 2009, **515** firearms licences were refused and **2,085** firearms licences were revoked.

There are a variety of reasons for refusals and revocations, the most common being a court-ordered prohibition or probation. Refusals and revocations are recorded in CFIS, a national database, and thus cannot be evaded by moving from one jurisdiction to another.

TABLE 10
Firearms Refusals and Revocations (2005-2009)

Year	Refusal	Revocation
2009	515	2,085
2008	462	1,833
2007	440	1,748
2006	391	2,064
2005	345	2,286
Total	2,153	10,016

CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC SAFETY

TABLE 11
REASONS for Refusals and Revocations (2009)*

	Refusal	%	Revocation	%
Court Ordered Prohibition / Probation	228	44%	1,651	79%
Domestic Violence	29	6%	61	3%
Drug Offences	20	4%	29	1%
Mental Health	50	10%	137	7%
Potential Risk to Others	155	30%	250	12%
Potential Risk to Self	107	21%	234	11%
Provided False Information	76	15%	20	1%
Unsafe Firearm Use and Storage	21	4%	58	3%
Violent	54	10%	73	4%
Total	515		2,085	

**Note: Because a refusal or revocation can be influenced by more than one factor, the total percentage for all categories of frequency may equal more than 100 per cent.*



CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC SAFETY

CHART 5
Reasons for Firearms Refusals (2009)*

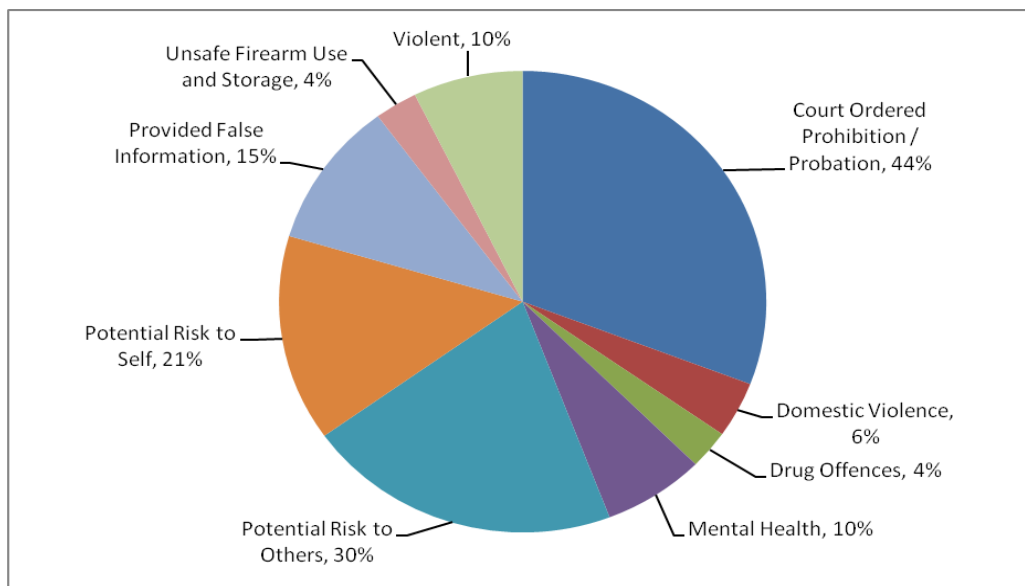
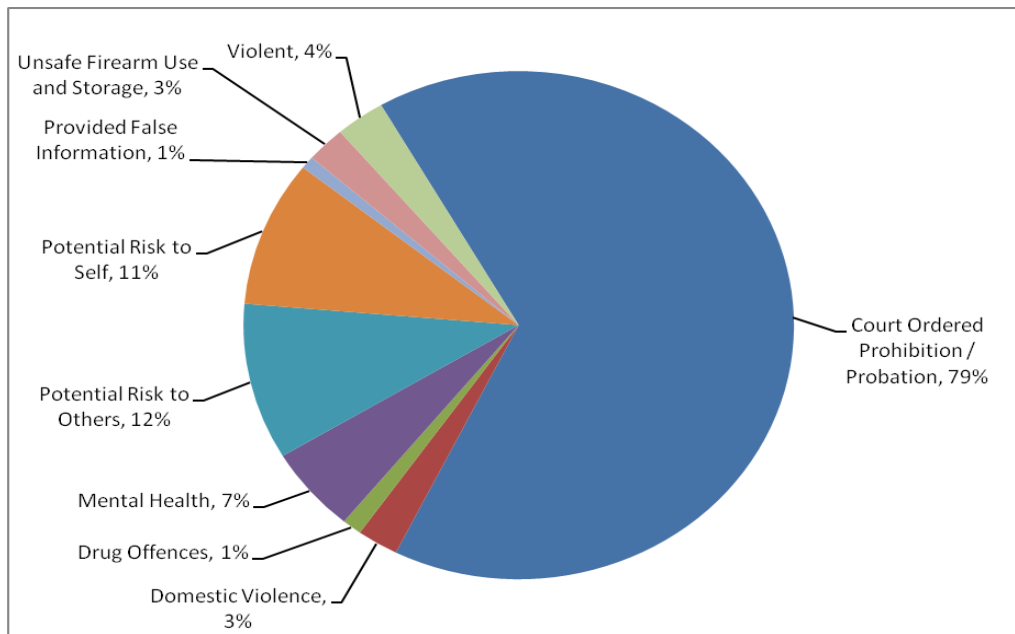


CHART 6
Reasons for Firearms Revocations (2009)*



**Note: Because a refusal or revocation can be influenced by more than one factor, the total percentage for all categories of frequency is more than 100 per cent.*

CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC SAFETY

FIREARM PROHIBITIONS

Courts are required, by the *Firearms Act*, to notify Chief Firearms Officers of all firearms prohibition orders in their jurisdictions. Firearms-licence applicants are screened and compared against prohibition orders. If applicants are subject to prohibition orders, they are refused a firearms licence and issued a notice of refusal with reasons.

If an individual in possession of a firearms licence is the subject of a prohibition order, the individual's licence is revoked by operation of law and he or she is instructed by the court to turn in the licence and dispose of all firearms. Upon receiving notification from the courts, the Chief Firearms Officer administratively revokes the individual's licence.

The Registrar of Firearms revokes registration certificates of registered firearms in these cases and provides instructions to the individual on how to dispose of firearms. The Registrar also refuses any pending application to register firearms and advises police regarding the revocation.

Firearms prohibition orders are captured in the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) Persons File and form part of the background and continuous-eligibility checks. The CFP also relies on information from municipal, provincial and federal courts in determining whether an individual is a potential threat to public safety. A match against a court order may result in the firearms officer conducting an investigation which could lead to a revocation or a change in licence conditions.

CHART 7
Firearms Prohibitions (Cumulative) (2005-2009)*



* The significant increase from 2005 to 2006 is the result of the CFP's use of the CPIC system as the source of statistics for the number of persons prohibited from possessing firearms as of 2006. The variance is further explained by new mandatory prohibitions for certain drug offence charges and convictions which came into effect at that time.

INSPECTIONS

Chief Firearms Officers are responsible for performing inspections of and approving shooting clubs and ranges within their jurisdictions in order to ensure their safe operation and compliance with the *Firearms Act*. In the interest of community safety, they are also authorized to inspect firearms businesses or individuals in possession of a large number of firearms to ensure safe storage and handling requirements are met.

FIREARM DISPOSALS

The CFP closely monitors the disposal of registered firearms. This information can be crucial during firearms crime investigations.



Seized Ammunition

SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

In 2009, the RCMP Canadian Firearms Program continued to focus its attention and resources on enhancing public and police officer safety.

As in previous years, the CFP partnered with other law enforcement groups and government agencies, both domestic and international, in recognizing that regulating firearms as well as actively addressing and trying to prevent their misuse and criminal use contributes to preserving the safety of individuals, communities and countries.

While the CFP maintained its established commitment to the regulatory aspects of firearms control by overseeing activities such as the security screening, safety training and licensing of firearms owners and users, it also provided significant assistance to firearms enforcement.

Further implementation and administration of the *Public Agents Firearms Regulations* produced data intended to more comprehensively inform police about firearms currently within Canada. This information can assist in cross-jurisdictional investigations where, for instance, a firearm stolen in one region is recovered in another part of the country.

The number of instances where the CFP is relied upon to assist police agencies with firearms investigations is growing, whether investigators require assistance to prepare or execute a warrant, identify or trace the history of a seized firearm, or prepare and give evidence about an illegal firearm.

Canadian law enforcement agencies are becoming more aware of the RCMP CFP's broad range of firearms-related services and are using them to protect both themselves and the public. The Canadian Firearms Program will continue to strengthen and expand these partnerships to enhance public safety.