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COMMISSIONER OF FIREARMS

2011 REPORT

THE RCMP CANADIAN FIREARMS PROGRAM
CANADA'S AUTHORITY ON FIREARMS



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Message from the Commissioner of Firearms



I am pleased to present the 2011 Commissioner of Firearms Report on behalf of the RCMP Canadian Firearms Program (CFP).

The CFP is Canada's authority on firearms and, as such, plays a key role in the regulation of firearms and in the enforcement of firearm laws in Canada. In administering the *Firearms Act*, the CFP oversees Canada's program of firearms safety training and, perhaps more importantly, carefully screens firearms licence applicants and holders to ensure firearms are used safely and responsibly. Sharing in the RCMP's commitment to *A Safe and Secure Canada*, the CFP also consists of several firearms-focused groups who support law enforcement investigations and the criminal justice system in addressing firearm crimes and misuse.

This report details the CFP's efforts and successes in 2011 and illustrates how it delivered on its commitment to help make and keep Canada safe in relation to firearms.

Commissioner Bob Paulson
Commissioner of Firearms
Royal Canadian Mounted Police

The Commissioner of the RCMP is also designated as the Commissioner of Firearms and, as such, has a dual mandate with respect to firearms. As the Commissioner of the RCMP, he is responsible for enforcing the law, which includes firearms law and combating gun crime. As the Commissioner of Firearms, he is responsible for administering the Firearms Act, which includes licensing of individuals and businesses, firearms safety training and registration of firearms.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Report

This report summarizes the activities of, and performance measures for, the RCMP Canadian Firearms Program (CFP) for the calendar year 2011. As required by the *Firearms Act*, the Commissioner of Firearms Report is submitted to the Minister of Public Safety for tabling in Parliament.

Program Overview

The CFP is represented by firearms experts across the country and comprises five groups:

- the Chief Firearms Officer Operations and Firearms Safety Training (CFOOFST) Directorate
- the Firearms Service Delivery (FSD) Directorate
- the Firearms Investigative and Enforcement Services Directorate (FIESD)
- the Firearms Management and Strategic Services (FMSS) Directorate, and
- the Information Technology Integration and Business Improvement (ITIBI) section

The CFOOFST Directorate is responsible for the CFP's ten Chief Firearms Officers (CFO), located within each province, with Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon being managed by the Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia CFOs, respectively. The CFOs are responsible for all firearms licences and authorizations within their jurisdictions.

The FSD Directorate has two components – the Canadian Firearms Registry, located in Ottawa, and the Central Processing Site, which includes the national contact centre in Miramichi, New Brunswick.

The CFP's main law enforcement component, FIESD, is coordinated through an office in Mississauga, Ontario. Other FIESD representatives are located in Ottawa or co-located with municipal and provincial police services and RCMP contract divisions across the country.

Located in National Headquarters, FMSS provides policy advice, strategic planning, performance measurement, outreach and other corporate functions, while ITIBI oversees the development and administration of the CFP's automated systems, databases, and websites and manages the CFP's operational business requirements.

The Department of Justice in Ottawa, Edmonton and St. John's provides legal advice to the CFP.



CFP Mission, Values and Priorities

The mission of the RCMP Canadian Firearms Program is to enhance public safety by helping to reduce the risk of death, injury and threat from firearms. The CFP provides Canadian and international law enforcement organizations with operational support vital to the prevention and investigation of firearms crime and misuse. It also continuously screens individual owners to confirm their eligibility to possess firearms and promotes responsible ownership, use and storage of firearms. In pursuit of 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 people, 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 to achieve the highest levels of service, compliance, efficiency and overall effectiveness;
- informs and engages its clients and stakeholders in reviewing and developing policy and regulations 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.

CFP Strategic Priorities

Aligned with both the Government of Canada's and the RCMP's commitment to *A Safe and Secure Canada*, the CFP's goal is to protect and enhance public safety. The CFP is committed to the following RCMP strategic priorities:

- **Serious and Organized Crime:** Experienced CFP firearms investigators work collaboratively with Canadian and international law enforcement partners to dismantle organized criminal groups who traffic firearms, often relying on firearms-focused analytical data produced by the CFP. This information helps disrupt organized crime by allowing investigators to observe illicit firearms patterns within a community, in a particular region or across the country.
- **National Security:** 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 information sharing with U.S. firearms enforcement, contributions to Canada's efforts at the United Nations and work with INTERPOL to combat the trafficking of illicit firearms.
- **Youth:** While individuals younger than 18 are not permitted to own firearms, they may obtain a minor's firearm licence which allows them to possess non-restricted firearms for purposes such

as hunting and target shooting. The CFP promotes the safe handling, use and storage of firearms for all owners and users and provides firearms safety training and information for youth.

- **Aboriginal Communities:** Committed to engaging and supporting Aboriginal communities on firearms-safety-related projects at national, regional and local levels, the CFP enhances both individual and community safety by providing firearms-safety education and training as well as verification, licensing and registration assistance. Through research and the pursuit of new safety and training initiatives, the CFP continues to strengthen its partnership with Canada's Aboriginal communities.

CFP Partnerships

The CFP works collaboratively and effectively with a variety of partner agencies.

Canadian law enforcement agencies

Working with and providing firearm-related services and information to domestic law enforcement groups, the CFP helps investigators and prosecutors address the illegal movement and criminal use of firearms. They can check to see if someone considered to be a security threat might have access to firearms, help to prepare and execute search warrants, provide firearms tracing, identification and disposal services and offer hands-on firearms training to law enforcement officials.



International law enforcement

The CFP works with international law enforcement agencies from the United States and other countries to prevent the illegal movement of firearms across borders and has established a quick and accurate electronic exchange of firearms trace information with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). The CFP also hosts or co-hosts an annual international firearms trafficking conference and has representatives who can travel to other countries in order to provide expert firearms-related training to other law enforcement groups when requested.

Public Safety Canada

The Minister of Public Safety has overall responsibility for the Canadian Firearms Program. The Commissioner of Firearms reports to the Minister of Public Safety and relies on Canadian Firearms Program staff to provide accurate and up-to-date firearms-related policy advice and information which is then passed on to the Minister and other senior government officials to assist them in carrying out their responsibilities.

Canada Border Services Agency

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) assesses and confirms Non-resident Firearms Declarations (which serve as temporary licences and firearms registration certificates) for firearms being imported into Canada, processes commercial firearm imports and inspects firearm shipments to confirm admissibility. They collect any applicable fees and confirm the firearms' destinations, the purpose for importation and the eligibility of the importer. CBSA also ensures firearms crossing the border are being transported safely and in accordance with Canadian law.

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

The CFP works with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) to ensure Canada's international commitments regarding firearms reflect the country's priorities as well as its capacity to implement them. DFAIT issues the permits required to export and import firearms.

Department of Justice

The Minister of Justice is responsible for the *Criminal Code of Canada*, including Part III (Firearms and Other Weapons). Policy development on criminal law related to firearms requires close cooperation between the CFP and the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice also provides legal advice and services to the CFP.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

The CFP works with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and advises Aboriginal land claims negotiators on firearms legislation and related issues.

Provinces and Territories

Firearms licensing and authorizations in every province and territory are managed by CFOs, who are part of the CFP. The provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia have appointed their own CFOs under the *Firearms Act* and have entered into contribution agreements for operational funding from the Government of Canada. The CFOs responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador as well as Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are appointed federally and are employees of the RCMP CFP.

Responsible for issuing firearms licences to businesses and individuals, CFOs must assess the risk associated with possession of firearms by every one of the 1.9 million Canadian firearm licence holders. The *Firearms Act* and associated regulations authorize CFOs to refuse to issue a licence or to revoke a licence if a public-safety risk is identified. Within their jurisdictions, CFOs also oversee the delivery of safety training, approve shooting ranges and clubs, approve transfers and issue authorizations to transport and carry restricted and prohibited firearms, and conduct inspections to ensure firearms are being used, transported and stored safely.

All regions of Canada are further supported by police officers who work for the CFP Firearms Investigative and Enforcement Services Directorate (FIESD) National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (NWEST). These officers are members of, or seconded to, the RCMP and provide firearms enforcement support and services to all law enforcement groups who investigate firearms crimes and misuse.



2011 HIGHLIGHTS

Compliance Incentives

In 2011, the Minister of Public Safety announced the extension of firearms licensing compliance incentives:

- A fee waiver for firearms licence renewals or upgrades from one type of licence to another;
- An amnesty that allows individuals who have expired firearms licences or possess unregistered non-restricted firearms the opportunity to come into compliance without risk of prosecution, providing they are attempting to come back into compliance; and
- The opportunity for eligible holders of expired Possession Only Licences (POL) to apply for a new POL.

Canada Safety Council Partnership

2011 marked the third year the CFP contributed to a Canada Safety Council (CSC) public awareness campaign about safety issues related to having firearms in the home, including safe storage and family issues such as suicide. New Public Service Announcements (PSA) for television, radio and print media were developed and distributed as were news releases to print and electronic media.

Public Awareness Campaign: Firearm Safety in the Home

In 2011, the following safety awareness campaign activities were completed:

New Public Service Announcements

The CSC, in consultation with the CFP, developed new Public Service Announcements (PSA) focusing on firearms safety. The Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians provided two emergency physicians as spokespersons. A PSA for radio and television was distributed to 516 contacts (195 TV stations and 321 radio stations) across Canada. New print PSAs were also developed and sent to print media along with a news release.

News Media

A major news release featured quotes from campaign supporters, including an emergency physician who appears in the new PSA. The release went to over 2,100 contacts in print, television and radio news media, and was posted on the CSC's website.

Print Information

The CSC continued to distribute the posters and pamphlets developed in the campaign's second year.

Information on the Web

The CSC featured the campaign online, and it continues to be available in the news release section of the CSC's website.

Summary

This campaign phase achieved its objectives in expanding the reach of the campaign messaging. With cooperation from the media and stakeholder organizations, the Canada Safety Council was able to achieve broad exposure. With an effective awareness package now fully developed and committed supporters actively involved, this campaign has the potential to maintain and increase its momentum in future years, to keep firearm safety in the public eye.

Shift in Firearms Licence Ratios

While the total number of adult individual firearm licences [Possession Only Licences (POL) as well as Possession and Acquisition Licences (PAL)] in Canada remained fairly constant between 2005 and 2011, there has been a noticeable shift in the ratio of POLs and PALs. In 2005, there were approximately 1.2 million POLs and 755,210 PALs. Conversely, in 2011, there were approximately 1.2 million PALs and 677,162 POLs. Because POLs were granted only to individuals who had firearms as of 2001, this licence will eventually disappear.

Year	POL	PAL
2011	677,162	1,217,564
2010	695,299	1,144,970
2009	777,479	1,058,907
2008	889,425	962,890
2007	989,248	874,933
2006	1,091,994	797,329
2005	1,203,124	755,210

In order to be granted a PAL, a firearm licence which permits its holder to possess and acquire firearms and acquire ammunition, applicants must first demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of firearms safety. This means that the majority of current firearms licence holders in Canada have recently been required to demonstrate their firearms safety knowledge and/or training.

Proposed Changes to Firearms Legislation

On October 25, 2011, the Minister of Public Safety introduced Bill C-19, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act*, also referred to as the *Ending the Long-gun Registry Act*. This bill was drafted to amend the *Criminal Code* and the *Firearms Act* to remove the requirement to register non-restricted firearms.

Please note that a legislative change took place in 2012, removing the requirement to register non-restricted firearms. This report reflects information for 2011, when this requirement was still in effect.

CFP LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

The CFP supports the Commissioner of the RCMP's law enforcement mandate by helping front-line law enforcement to investigate and prosecute persons involved in the illegal movement and criminal use of firearms. The Firearms Investigative & Enforcement Services Directorate (FIESD) was established to support this mandate.

National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (NWEST)

The CFP NWEST provides support, services and information to front-line police officers who combat the illegal movement of firearms into and within Canada and their subsequent criminal use. Assistance available 24/7 from NWEST includes:

- Firearms information, guidance and investigative advice
- Urgent hands-on firearms assistance
- Firearms identification and tracing
- Assistance with firearms serial number recovery
- Development and execution of firearms-related search warrants
- Firearm seizures and exhibit organization
- Providing direction in determining firearm-related charges
- Firearms case law information and advice
- Firearm-related court preparation
- Affidavit preparation
- Expert witness services
- Firearm-related training and lectures
- Assistance with firearm amnesties and turn-in programs
- Destruction and disposal of firearms and ammunition



Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre (CNFTC)

The origin and history of a firearm can be discovered through the tracing process. Since the firearm itself is a critical piece of physical evidence in a gun crime, tracing the firearm to a source individual or criminal organization can make the case for the Crown and open up new leads to other criminal activity. The CFP CNFTC provides this service to Canadian and international law enforcement agency investigators. They are also able to exchange trace information electronically with U.S. investigators which enables a quick and accurate exchange of information. In 2011, the CNFTC received and processed 2,242 firearms tracing requests.

The group also performed 1,000 indices checks on behalf of Canadian police agencies and Interpol in 2011. The CNFTC receives lists of stolen, missing, seized or crime firearms from these sources and queries various Canadian firearms-related databases, checking for any related information.

Specialized Firearms Support Services (SFSS)

CFP SFSS includes the Firearms Reference Table (FRT), a comprehensive and user-friendly computer-based tool, developed and maintained by the CFP. With more than 141,000 firearms reference items, it provides law enforcement users with a systematic and standardized method of identifying and describing firearms, and improves accuracy in import-export controls and international communications involving transnational firearms crime. It also assists in firearms tracing, record keeping and determining the class of a firearm, as outlined under the applicable *Criminal Code* definitions. The FRT database is made available to all police and regulatory agencies through a variety of technologies, and the FRT group is recognized as the centre of expertise in the identification of firearms.

The 2011 FRT DVD was released in February/March 2011, with distribution including:

- 3,926 Canadian-version DVDs
- 1,392 International-version DVDs
- 47 Corporate*-version DVDs

**The corporate version of the FRT is identical in both data and functionality to the individual DVD, but the installation process is different. It is ideal for large police departments or government agencies that run their own shared internal network and have a large volume of users.*

The following changes occurred in the distribution of the International version of the FRT DVD in 2011:

- *84 new international FRT clients from various countries*
- *11 new countries added to international distribution list*
- *Interpol headquarters (Lyon) was updated in 2011 and supplied the FRT via the Interpol IFRT to 188 nations*

The following countries receive international versions of the FRT, with those in red added in 2011:

Argentina	Colombia	Jamaica	St Lucia
Australia	Costa Rica	Kosovo	Serbia and Montenegro
Austria	Croatia	Lesotho	Spain
Bahamas	France	Malaysia	Sweden
Bahrain	Germany	Mexico	Switzerland
Bangladesh	Guatemala	Netherlands	Taiwan
Barbados	Guinea	New Zealand	Thailand
Belgium	Hungary	Norway	Trinidad and Tobago
Brazil	India	Oman	Turkey
Canada	Ireland	Pakistan	United Arab Emirates
Cayman Islands	Israel	Peru	United Kingdom
Chile	Italy	Philippines	United States

In August 2011, a Web version of the FRT was made available to clients through a secure Internet environment. This version is updated daily and therefore gives users access to the most current firearm records and images. It also gives them access to the FRT from any Internet connection. By the end of 2011, 539 clients had registered for this service.

Another part of SFSS is the Mobile Service Delivery Vehicle (MSDV) program. Here, trained RCMP firearms personnel, equipped with specially outfitted vehicles, stationed or travelling across the country, provide various firearms-focused services to law enforcement groups. When paired with the Mobile Ammunition Combustion System (MACS), MSDV services include on-site firearms and ammunition identification, examination, test-firing, destruction and disposal.

Summary of SFSS 2011 Firearms Support and Training:

- Daily support provided to federal, provincial and municipal police, specialized Guns and Gangs units as well as government agencies such as CBSA and DFAIT.
- Support to a provincial police service in April 2011 to assist with the identification and class verification of 187 firearms for court.
- Assisted NWEST and municipal police services with the identification of military weapons.
- In January 2011, three sessions of Firearm Verification training were provided:
 1. CFO office, including Firearm Officers
 2. Large municipal police force Guns and Gangs unit
 3. Businesses/Museums in a Canadian metropolitan area
- Training provided to specialized provincial weapons enforcement unit.
- Three sessions of the Canadian Firearms Safety Course were offered to participants from the RCMP and other government groups.
- Provided firearm identification training in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Delivered FRT presentation at the CFP-hosted International Firearms Trafficking School.
- Released two online firearm training courses - *Firearm Verification* and *Firearm Verification for Public Agents 2.0*.

Firearms Internet Investigations Support (FIIS) Unit

The Firearms Internet Investigations Support (FIIS) Unit is a full open-source investigative unit providing a range of Internet support services, both in the firearm applicant screening process and directly to front-line police officers. CFP FIIS gathers information from a variety of sites and, when potentially criminal activities involving firearms are detected, the information is forwarded to the police of jurisdiction for further investigation.

In 2011 the CFP FIIS unit screened 3,147 restricted firearms licence applicants, 666 more than in 2010. They also forwarded 42 follow-up reports, regarding high-risk applicants, to Chief Firearm Officers.

This unit also responded to 47 direct requests for supplementary information on individuals, firearms businesses or organizations, up from 40 in 2010.

FIIS also contributed to 21 investigations by providing information found through various open source avenues including blogs, forums, social networking and other publicly accessible online sites. This is an increase from 2010, when the group contributed to 13 investigations.

Firearms Operations and Enforcement Support (FOES)

The CFP FOES unit receives and analyzes information on Canadian firearms trends and patterns, suspected criminals and smuggling routes. They then provide this information to law enforcement agencies to help combat illicit firearms and the impact these firearms have on public and police officer safety. FOES can provide law enforcement partners with an operational overview of firearms within their region or across Canada in order to assist with investigations and prosecutions.

NWEST, CNFTC and FOES are also integral components of the Investment to Combat the Criminal Use of Firearms, as described in the RCMP Departmental Performance Report.

Public Agents Firearms Regulations (PAFR)

The *Public Agents Firearms Regulations*, in effect since 2008, obligate certain public sector agencies, including police forces, to report all agency (owned by the agency) and protected (seized, turned in or found by police) firearms in their possession.

This firearm-reporting requirement supports Canada's commitment to combat the trafficking of illicit firearms as it creates a comprehensive, centralized and accessible database containing firearm information from across the country. PAFR data can be used to assist in investigations and has particular relevance in multi-jurisdictional cases as it helps monitor the location, movement and distribution of illicit firearms across Canada. This centralized and accessible firearms database makes it easier for law enforcement officers to identify what types of firearms are being seized nationally and in their jurisdiction, and determine where these firearms may have originated.

Table 2: Canadian Public Service Agencies* in Possession of Firearms - 2011	
Agency Type	Number
Court	121
Federal Agency	242
Municipal Agency	46
Police Academy	6
Police Agency/Detachments	1,020
Provincial Agency	251
Total	1,686

*The numbers represent **individual reporting agencies** in possession of agency and/or protected 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.

Table 3: Firearms Seized by Public Service Agencies (Location) - 2011	
Province/Territory	Number of Firearms
Newfoundland and Labrador	368
Prince Edward Island	4
Nova Scotia	1,616
New Brunswick	1,168
Quebec	8,561
Ontario	9,643
Manitoba	1,736
Saskatchewan	886
Alberta	3,611
British Columbia	5,807
Yukon	120
Northwest Territories	91
Nunavut	116
Total	33,727

These numbers represent only information reported to the CFP and do not necessarily reflect ALL firearms seized in Canada

Table 4: Firearms Seized by Public Service Agencies (Class of Firearm) - 2011	
Class	Number of Firearms
Non-Restricted	27,655
Restricted	4,293
Prohibited	1,767
Unknown	12
Total	33,727

These numbers represent only information reported to the CFP and do not necessarily reflect ALL firearms seized in Canada

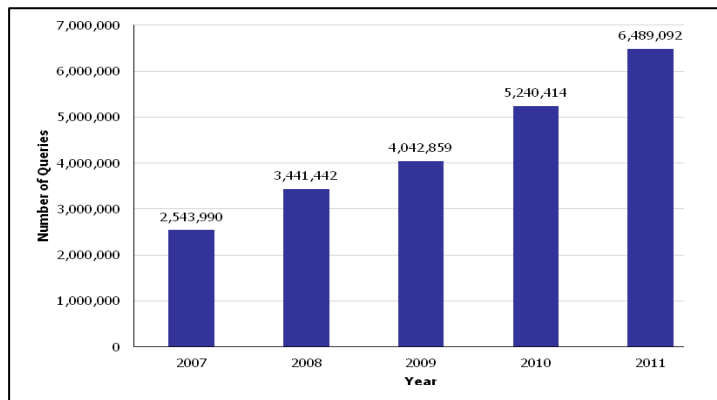
Canadian Firearms Information System (CFIS) Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) Canadian Firearms Registry Online (CFRO)

The Canadian Firearms Information System contains current firearms licence-holder data. Licensed individuals and businesses are continuous-eligibility screened and, if a licence holder is the subject of a Canadian Police Information Centre incident report anywhere in Canada, a Firearms Interest Police (FIP) report is automatically generated and sent to the CFP for further review. CFIS also contains descriptions and details of the 7.8 million firearms registered in Canada. Whenever a firearm is reported lost, stolen or recovered in CPIC, a CPIC “event” is automatically generated and sent to the Canadian Firearms Registry for review.

A subset of the data contained in CFIS comprises the Canadian Firearms Registry Online, which law enforcement officers can query via CPIC. CFRO information helps police trace recovered firearms or anticipate the presence of firearms at a location prior to attendance. Also, if a firearms licence is revoked and police are deployed to recover the firearm(s), they can query CFRO to determine the number of firearms associated to the individual, their descriptions and their serial numbers.

In 2011, Canadian law enforcement agencies queried the Canadian Firearms Registry Online an average of 17,778 times per day.

Chart 1: Annual Canadian Firearms Registry Online (CFRO) Queries



CFP Geographical Firearms Reports

The CFP has developed the ability to provide police services with jurisdiction-specific firearms-related statistical information, upon request. By combining data from the Canadian Firearms Information System, Statistics Canada and other sources, the CFP can prepare reports with current and accurate firearms data relevant to specific geographical areas. This factual and timely firearms information can help police address and counter gun violence, combat the illegal movement of firearms in their jurisdiction and focus their investigative efforts and planning in relation to firearms crime.

CFP SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

Licensing of Firearm Users

In general, all individuals and businesses that possess or use firearms must be licensed. Similarly, all individuals or businesses who acquire firearms or ammunition must be licensed. There are four types of firearms licences available:

1. Possession Only Licence (POL)
2. Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL)
3. Minor's Licence
4. Business Licence

Table 5: Firearms Licences by Type and Province/Territory (as of December 31, 2011)

Province/Territory	Possession and Acquisition Licence	Possession Only Licence	Minor's Licence	Total Licences
Newfoundland and Labrador	45,787	27,768	208	73,763
Prince Edward Island	3,119	3,363	16	6,498
Nova Scotia	33,653	41,113	1,133	75,899
New Brunswick	32,724	40,932	143	73,799
Quebec	327,288	170,918	19	498,225
Ontario	330,506	194,307	3,963	528,776
Manitoba	54,360	27,279	325	81,964
Saskatchewan	61,434	31,044	110	92,588
Alberta	164,259	62,283	1,627	228,169
British Columbia	151,579	76,475	455	228,509
Yukon	5,291	1,088	42	6,421
Northwest Territories	4,620	541	44	5,205
Nunavut	2,942	51	6	2,999
TOTAL	1,217,562	677,162	8,091	1,902,815

Table 6: Number of Firearms Licences Issued by Type (Including Renewals)

Licence Type	Total Issued in 2011
Possession and Acquisition Licence (New and Renewals)	267,580
Possession Only Licence (Renewals Only)	70,140
Minor's Licence	3,925
Total Issued to Individuals	341,645
Total Issued to Businesses	1,993
Total	343,638

As of December 31, 2011, there were 4,390 firearms businesses, not including carriers and museums, in Canada, licensed under the *Firearms Act*. Of these, 2,410 are licensed to sell ammunition only.

In 2011, the average processing time for a standard firearms licence application (new or renewal) in which all requested information was provided and no follow up was required was 25 days.

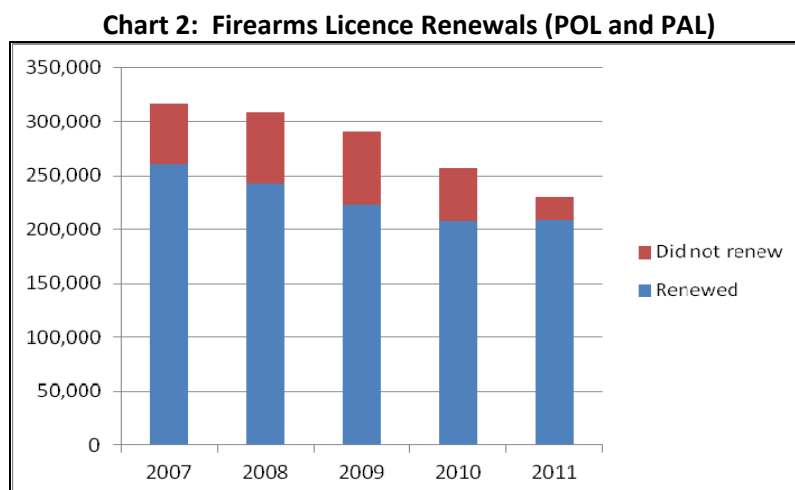
Because of the need for reference checks, a deeper review of an applicant's background, and a mandatory 28-day waiting period for all new Possession and Acquisition Licences (PAL), the average processing time for a new PAL was 40 days.

Firearms Licence Renewals

As stated in the *Firearms Act*, firearms licence holders are responsible for renewing their licences prior to expiry. The CFP facilitates this by sending out partially populated renewal application forms approximately 90 days prior to the expiry of the current licence. Licence holders are legally required to advise the CFP of any address changes. This also helps ensure they receive these renewal reminders and pre-populated application forms.

Possession Only Licences (POL) are generally available only as renewals. However, the "New POL" compliance incentive, in effect until May 16, 2013, offers individuals with expired POLs the opportunity to apply for a new POL, providing they meet certain requirements. This licence is available only to holders of expired POLs and will not affect the trend toward the eventual disappearance of this licence.

In 2011, a total of 230,767 licences (POL and PAL) for individuals in possession of firearms required renewal. Chart 2 shows the year-on-year trend toward a greater portion of licencees renewing their licences.



Other advantages to renewing a licence before it expires include:

1. Renewal application forms are shorter and more streamlined than licence application forms;
2. Avoiding the risk of having a registration certificate revoked or losing grandfathered privileges to possess prohibited firearms; and
3. Avoiding the risk of penalties for being in unlawful possession of a firearm.

Firearms Business Support

Organizations and businesses that manufacture, sell, possess, handle, display or store firearms or ammunition must have a firearms business licence. Employees who handle firearms for these businesses must also have firearms licences, and all firearms in a business inventory must be registered.

Businesses must submit to periodic inspections by a CFP Firearms Officer who confirms the safe and lawful business practices and storage of firearms.

The CFP offers businesses the option of performing firearm registration and 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.

Standards set out in the *Firearms Act* seek to ensure the safety of members, visitors and the general public in relation to shooting clubs and ranges. CFP-published range guidelines and periodic CFP Firearms Officer inspections promote firearm and participant safety at these locations.

Chief Firearms Officers (CFO)

There is a Chief Firearms Officer for each province and territory, responsible for the administration and delivery of key components of the *Firearms Act*:

- licensing individuals and businesses
- approving transfers of restricted and prohibited firearms
- approving shooting clubs and shooting ranges
- approving gun shows
- issuing Authorizations to Carry
- issuing Authorizations to Transport
- designating Firearms Officers
- designating firearms safety inspectors and
- designating instructors for firearms safety courses

This includes determining an applicant's eligibility to obtain or keep a firearms licence. The CFO can issue, refuse to issue, renew or revoke a licence or authorization to transport, carry, transfer or sponsor, or set specific conditions on these documents.

Firearm Registration / Registrar of Firearms

The Registrar of Firearms is responsible for the administration and delivery of other key components of the *Firearms Act*. The CFP Registrar is responsible for the following:

- issuing, refusing to issue or revoking firearm registration certificates for businesses and individuals
- issuing, refusing to issue or revoking carrier licences
- administering the *Public Agents Firearms Regulations*
- maintaining Canadian Firearms Registry data to ensure its quality and availability for law enforcement
- maintaining the Firearms Verifiers' Network

As of December 31, 2011, the *Firearms Act* required 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. As with firearms licences, a subset of this information, contained in the Canadian Firearms Registry Online, can then be accessed by law enforcement agencies via CPIC.

Firearm Class	2010	2011	Difference
Non-restricted	6,943,621	7,133,143	189,522
Restricted	501,079	531,735	30,656
Prohibited	201,999	197,024	-4,975
Total	7,646,699	7,861,902	215,203

Registration applicants must be at least 18 years old and have a firearms licence allowing them to possess that class or category of firearm. There is no fee for registering a firearm and registration certificates have no expiry date. The only time a registration certificate needs to be replaced, other than when the firearm is transferred to a new owner, is when the firearm is modified in a way that changes its class.

Before a firearm can be registered for the first time, it must be verified. Verification is the process used to confirm the class of a firearm.

All firearms can be categorized into one of three classes:

- **Non-restricted** firearms are typically shotguns and rifles
- **Restricted** firearms are predominantly handguns
- **Prohibited** firearms* are mostly assault rifles, particular types of handguns and fully automatic firearms

*Prohibited firearms cannot be newly imported into Canada by individuals. Only individuals "grandfathered" to have prohibited firearms are allowed to possess them.

When a firearm is transferred to a new owner, the record must be changed to reflect both the de-registration from the original owner and the re-registration to the new owner. This transfer process can often be completed quickly by telephone.

Table 8: Firearm Registrations (individual and business) by Region - 2011				
Province/Territory	Non-restricted firearms	Restricted firearms	Prohibited firearms	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	207,108	4,250	1,556	212,914
Prince Edward Island	22,111	1,737	793	24,641
Nova Scotia	286,268	16,468	7,114	309,850
New Brunswick	274,255	12,136	5,110	291,501
Quebec	1,618,935	58,579	32,792	1,710,306
Ontario	2,110,244	190,118	82,121	2,382,483
Manitoba	347,659	19,318	5,926	372,903
Saskatchewan	415,460	27,495	8,203	451,158
Alberta	930,519	97,850	24,584	1,052,953
British Columbia	838,878	100,013	27,865	966,756
Yukon	24,452	1,883	395	26,730
Northwest Territories	19,292	1,103	328	20,723
Nunavut	12,626	170	39	12,835
Other	25,336	615	198	26,149
Total	7,133,143	531,735	197,024	7,861,902

Firearms Assistance and Outreach to the Public

The CFP is committed to communicating with the public and distributing firearms safety information through a variety of media. The goal is to improve public safety by expanding awareness of and compliance with safe use, handling and storage of firearms.

CFP Firearms Management & Strategic Services (FMSS) outreach activities also inform the public on how the CFP works with and assists front-line police and other law enforcement agencies in gathering and processing evidence and investigating and prosecuting people and organizations involved in the illegal movement, unlawful possession and criminal use of firearms. In 2011, the CFP FMSS maintained the Program's commitment to partnerships with various Canadian law enforcement organizations by distributing enforcement-focused firearms-related information in bulletin, brochure, card and fact-sheet formats. To enhance service to police, the CFP also has toll-free telephone lines and e-mail addresses designated for police-only assistance.

The CFP website is continually updated by FMSS to provide accurate and current information regarding firearms safety, policies and client-service initiatives to a wide and varied audience. In 2011, the CFP website received 4,235,369 "unique page views" – individual page viewings, not including multiple viewings within the same session.

The public, when seeking firearms-related information or assistance, can 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 2011, the CFP call centre received 977,005 telephone inquiries and approximately 8,500 e-mail inquiries, including firearms application status checks and requests for information and forms.

CFP representatives also attended hunting, outdoor and gun shows across the country, distributing firearms-safety materials and responding to direct in-person requests for firearms information.

Outreach to Aboriginal Communities

The CFP provides firearms services to Aboriginal people and their communities and is committed to continually improving the quality and variety of these services. In an effort to best meet these needs, the CFP FMSS has conducted research studies and helped to develop service-delivery programs.

In the months of January, February and March 2011, as well as during October, November and December 2011, the CFP FMSS supported safety training within northern Ontario Aboriginal communities. During these periods, 287 individuals successfully completed firearms safety-training certification. As part of these safety-training outreach initiatives, the CFP also helped with applications, registrations, verifications and general firearms information provision.

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



KEEPING CANADA SAFE

Firearms Safety Training

As outlined in the *Firearms Act*, to be licensed to use or possess firearms in Canada, individuals must demonstrate awareness of the principles relating to safe handling and use of firearms. The Canadian Firearms Safety Course (CFSC) and the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course (CRFSC) are fundamental firearms-education and safety-training components of the CFP. Developed in partnership with the provinces and territories, as well as organizations with an ongoing interest in hunter education and firearms safety, these courses provide instruction on the safe handling, use, transportation and storage of both restricted and non-restricted firearms.

The *Firearms Act* states that individuals who want to acquire non-restricted firearms must pass the CFSC test, while individuals wanting to acquire restricted firearms must pass both the CFSC and the CRFSC tests. In 2011, there were 86,740 CFSC graduates and 26,509 CRFSC graduates.

Year	Canadian Firearm Safety Course	Canadian Restricted Firearm Safety Course
2007	72,421	15,382
2008	83,225	20,149
2009	83,287	22,773
2010	84,622	23,246
2011	86,740	26,509

The RCMP CFP is responsible for the continued development, implementation, evaluation and revision of national firearms-safety standards, the CFSC and the CRFSC. Each CFO is responsible for the delivery of the courses within their jurisdiction.

Enhanced Screening of Firearms Licence Applicants

The CFP employs an in-depth licence applicant screening process to reduce the possibility that individuals who pose a public safety risk acquire or have access to firearms. All first-time firearms licence applicants undergo thorough security screening, including interviews of the applicants and their references, as well as Internet checks.

In 2011, the CFP performed enhanced security screening on 40,141 firearms licence applicants and interviewed 120,424 applicants or their references.

Firearms Licence Application Refusals

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

In 2011, there were 520 firearms licence applications refused, for a variety of reasons. (This total does not include the numerous applications which are withdrawn by applicants subsequent to questioning but prior to a potential application refusal by a CFO.)

Table 10: Number of Firearms Licence Application Refusals	
Year	Refusals
2007	440
2008	462
2009	515
2010	570
2011	520
Total	2,507

Table 11: Reasons for Firearms Licence Application Refusals (2011)	
Reason	Refusals*
Court-Ordered Prohibition / Probation	237
Domestic Violence	34
Drug Offences	32
Mental Health	92
POL Ineligible	10
Potential Risk to Others	164
Potential Risk to Self	141
Provided False Information	42
Unsafe Firearm Use and Storage	17
Violent	68
*A firearms licence application refusal can be influenced by more than one factor, therefore the sum of refusal reasons will exceed the annual total of licence applications refused.	

Continuous Eligibility Screening of Firearms Licence Holders

All firearms licences are recorded in the Canadian Firearms Information System, which automatically checks with the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) daily to determine if a licence holder has been the subject of a CPIC incident report anywhere in Canada. Any match generates a Firearms Interest Police (FIP) report which is automatically forwarded to the relevant Chief Firearms Officer for follow-up. Some of these reports are “excluded”, which means they require no further action, but some prompt a review of the individual's firearms licence and may result in its revocation and the seizure of any firearms.

Province/Territory	Confirmed	Excluded	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	808	1,024	1,832
Prince Edward Island	96	208	304
Nova Scotia	1,341	2,472	3,813
New Brunswick	1,388	2,748	4,136
Quebec	11,239	17,427	28,666
Ontario	18,903	25,336	44,239
Manitoba	2,880	4,272	7,152
Saskatchewan	2,145	2,446	4,591
Alberta	4,744	3,920	8,664
British Columbia	5,537	8,874	14,411
Yukon	343	207	550
Northwest Territories	122	80	202
Nunavut	65	4	69
Total	49,611	69,018	118,629

Firearms Licence Revocations

Under the *Firearms Act*, CFOs are authorized to revoke a firearms licence, based on their assessment of the licence holder's risk to public safety.

In 2011, there were 2,365 firearms licences revoked. This number is increasing year over year, possibly as a result of greater awareness regarding criminal offences which require firearm prohibitions and licence revocations.

Year	Revocations
2007	1,748
2008	1,833
2009	2,085
2010	2,231
2011	2,365
Total	10,262

Table 14: Reasons for Firearms Licence Revocations (2011)	
Reason	Revocations*
Court-Ordered Prohibition / Probation	1,758
Domestic Violence	55
Drug Offences	45
Mental Health	214
POL Ineligible	63
Potential Risk to Others	390
Potential Risk to Self	386
Provided False Information	28
Unsafe Firearm Use and Storage	59
Violent	91
*A firearms licence revocation can be influenced by more than one factor, therefore the sum of revocation reasons will exceed the annual total of firearms licences revoked.	

Firearms licence application refusals and firearms licence revocations are recorded in the CFP's national Canadian Firearms Information System database. Individuals who have an application refused or a licence revoked, therefore, cannot evade this decision by moving from one jurisdiction to another.

Firearms Prohibitions

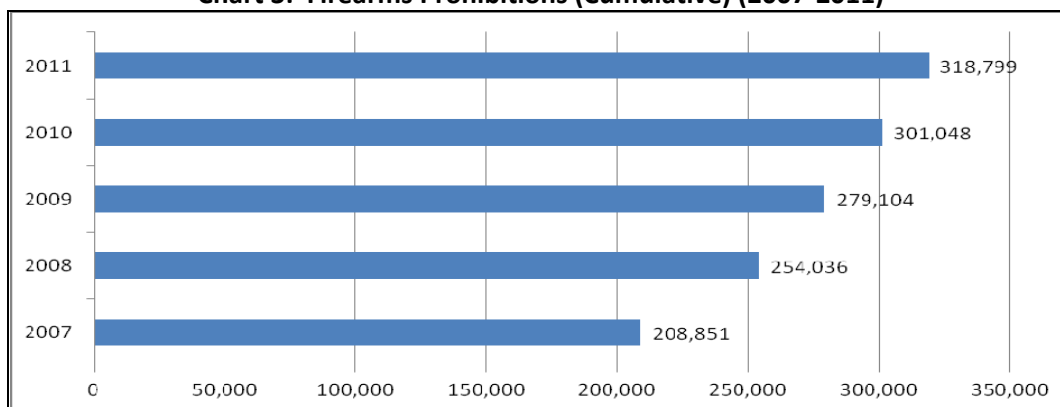
Courts must notify Chief Firearms Officers of all firearms prohibition orders in their jurisdiction. Firearms-licence applicant screening includes checking if an applicant is the subject of a prohibition order which would then lead to the refusal of a firearms licence application.

If an individual who holds a firearms licence is the subject of a prohibition order, their licence is revoked and they are instructed by the court to turn in the licence and dispose of all firearms. When the Chief Firearms Officer is notified by the court, the individual's firearms licence is administratively revoked.

In these cases, the CFP Registrar of Firearms administratively revokes the associated registration certificates and provides the subject with instructions on how to dispose of the firearms. The Registrar also refuses any pending applications to register firearms, advises police of the revocation and follows up on the disposition of firearms in support of law enforcement.

Prohibition orders are recorded in the Canadian Police Information Centre Persons File and form part of the background and continuous-eligibility checks for firearms licences. An applicant with a Prohibition Order would not receive a firearms licence. Information from municipal, provincial and federal courts also helps to determine whether an individual is a potential threat to public safety. A match against a court order may result in the Chief Firearms Officer conducting an investigation which could lead to a revocation or a change in licence conditions.

Chart 3: Firearms Prohibitions (Cumulative) (2007-2011)



Firearms Registration Application Refusals and Certificate Revocations

The CFP Registrar of Firearms revokes registration certificates and, if applicable, refuses firearm registration applications whenever a firearm owner’s licence is revoked for public safety reasons. The Registrar also refuses firearms registration applications when the firearm owner’s licence is revoked as a result of a court-issued firearms prohibition order. Other reasons for registration certificate revocations or registration application refusals include expired firearms licences, individuals not having adequate licence privileges for a certain class of firearms or individuals failing to provide sufficient information to meet registration requirements.

In 2011, there were 181 firearm registration applications refused and 89,805 firearm registration certificates revoked.

Following the revocation of registration certificates and the refusal of registration applications, the Registrar monitors the disposition of the firearms and, if necessary, refers the matter to local law enforcement agencies for further action.

Table 15: Number of Registration Refusals and Revocations

Year	Applications Refused	Certificates Revoked	Total
2007	618	253,107	253,725
2008	747	191,208	191,955
2009	407	195,543	195,950
2010	311	163,909	164,220
2011	181	89,805	89,986
Total	2,264	893,572	895,836

Firearm-related Inspections

Chief Firearms Officers are responsible for approving and performing inspections of shooting clubs and ranges within their jurisdictions to ensure safe operation and compliance with the *Firearms Act*. For community safety, they are also authorized to inspect firearms businesses and individuals who collect firearms to ensure safe storage and handling requirements are met.

Range Safety and Use-of-Force Coordinator

The Range Safety and Use-of-Force Coordinator develops and implements initiatives to support the continuous improvement of Canadian shooting ranges. They develop and implement range safety measures and review range safety inspection reports to improve guidelines, procedures and forms used by firearms officers for shooting range inspections. They also review range applications, conduct quality control checks, provide feedback on inspection reports and request or conduct follow-up inspections as required.

1-800 Safety Line – Reporting Public Safety Concerns

The CFP offers a toll-free line (1-800-731-4000) and urges those with non-emergency firearm-related public safety concerns to call and report them. The CFP encourages people to call if they believe a person who owns firearms could be a danger to themselves or to others, or if they know of any valid reason why a person who has a firearms licence or has applied for one should not have such a licence.

These reports about potential threats to public safety are routed to Chief Firearms Officers who respond by taking appropriate action.



COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

The CFP is Canada’s centre for firearms expertise, committed to keeping our country safe from firearms crime and misuse.

In 2011, the RCMP Canadian Firearms Program maintained its dedication to enhancing public safety in Canadian communities by providing police and other law enforcement partners with firearms-focused assistance and information vital to the prevention, investigation and prosecution of firearms crime. When investigators need help tracing or identifying a firearm, preparing or executing a search warrant involving firearms or organizing firearm exhibits for court – they can rely on the knowledge and experience of CFP firearm experts.

The CFP also continued to promote and regulate responsible ownership, safe use and secure storage of firearms in order to reduce the risk of firearms-related death and injury. This is achieved through mandatory firearms safety training, screening of licence applicants, inspections, and monitoring of restricted and prohibited firearms.

The Canadian Firearms Program is Canada’s authority on firearms.

