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# **RCMP Canadian Firearms Program**

## **Program Evaluation**

**Final Approved Report  
February 2010**

**National Program Evaluation Services**

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## Introduction

This report presents a Strategic Evaluation of the Canadian Firearms Program (CFP), in response to a recommendation contained in the Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts<sup>1</sup> published in December 2006 in Chapter 4 of the May 2006 Report of the Auditor General of Canada (Canadian Firearms Program (CFP)) and in accordance with the Treasury Board policy on Transfer Payments. The first section of this report includes the profile, performance measures, evaluation, and reporting plans concerning the CFP and has been updated to reflect recent administrative changes and amendments to the day to day operations of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Canadian Firearms Program in the administration of the *Firearms Act* and the CFP. It also addresses the Auditor General's recommendation that the CFP develop a results chain and improve performance reporting for the Program.

## Methodology

The scope of the strategic evaluation is limited to direct costs incurred by the CFP and RCMP partners in the administration of the CFP (see section 2.5 for a definition of direct and indirect costs). The evaluation covers the key evaluation issues of relevance, success, cost-effectiveness and implementation of the CFP.

In October 2007, members of the RCMP's National Program Evaluation Service (NPES) began conducting provincial interviews for the Canadian Firearms Program. Most of the interviews were arranged in advance and candidates were randomly selected from large groupings where possible. Two (2) opt-in provinces were visited: New Brunswick and Ontario; and three (3) opt-out: British Columbia, Alberta and the territory of Nunavut. The following key findings were summarized from interviews and open source documents.

The RCMP's National Program Evaluation Services reviewed existing literature relating to gun policy and regulatory models, with particular emphasis on public safety issues, including suicide, accidental deaths and homicide.

## Limitations

There are some limitations to the evaluation that must be noted at this point. A fulsome comparison with other registration and licensing programs could not be completed because of differences in geographical areas, populations served, services offered by the program and the organization it represents (administration versus operations). There was also an inability to compare financial data at the provincial level as the team could not readily separate out the costs borne by the national program from those at the provincial level.

The evaluation was delayed due in large part to the need for more reliable statistical public safety data. . While there is acknowledgment of the "inconsistent and contradictory"<sup>2</sup> data that exist, the Evaluation team devoted a large portion of time to determining new data and then researching and

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<http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/cmte/CommitteePublication.aspx?COM=10466&Lang=1&SourceId=185587>

MacKay, Robin. Legislative Analysis: Bill S5- The Long Gun Registry Repeal Act., Parliamentary and Information Research Service, 2009. "Information and statistics used to evaluate the efficacy of Canada's firearm registry in reducing crime, and therefore the merits of a bill to eliminate the long gun registry, have been inconsistent and contradictory."

analyzing, with the help of Statistics Canada personnel, most of the data provided in the findings and in the open source document found in the statistical section of this report.

## Profile

### History of Firearms Control

The history of firearms control in Canada is extensive, dating back to early Confederation. Prior to 1892, Justices of the Peace had the authority to impose a six-month jail term for anyone carrying a handgun if the person did not have reasonable cause to fear assault against life or property. In 1892, Canada's first *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* also created an offence to sell a pistol to anyone under 16 years of age while requiring 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 gun.

Although there were a series of firearms control measures introduced between 1913 and 1991, those of significant importance include:

**1934:** The first real registration requirement for handguns was created. Prior to this handgun registration requirement, when a permit holder bought a handgun, only the individual who issued the permit was notified. The new handgun provisions required non-centralized records identifying the owner, the owner's address, and the firearm.

**1951:** Under the Commissioner of the RCMP, the registry system for handguns was centralized for the first time. Additionally, automatic firearms were added to the category of firearms that had to be registered.

**1968-1969:** The categories of "firearm," "restricted weapon," and "prohibited weapon" were defined and implemented. This resolved confusion over specific types of weapons and allowed the creation of specific legislative controls for each of the new categories. The new definitions included powers to designate weapons to be prohibited or restricted by Order-in-Council. The requirement that each restricted weapon have a separate registration certificate took effect in 1969.

**1977 - Bill C-51:** This legislation established the first general screening process for prospective firearms owners. This was accomplished through the introduction of a statutory requirement stipulating that anyone who wishes to acquire a firearm must first obtain a Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC).

**1991 - Bill C-17:** This legislation strengthened many of the 1977 measures, including more stringent and detailed FAC screening procedures and a mandatory twenty-eight day waiting period between application and issuance of the FAC; increased penalties for firearm-related crimes; and clear regulations for safe storage, handling, and transportation was extended to include individuals. In addition, applicants had to show knowledge of the safe handling of firearms.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> To demonstrate knowledge, "non-grandfathered" applicants had to pass a test or a firearms safety course approved by a provincial Attorney General, or a firearms officer had to certify that the applicant was competent in handling firearms safely. Moreover, Bill C-17 required that safety courses had to cover firearm laws as well as safety issues. It should be noted that both of these Bill C-17 provisions came into force in 1994.

## Current Legislation

In 1993, the Federal Government indicated its intention to proceed with additional measures, including a universal licensing system that would apply to individuals and a universal registration system that would apply to all firearms. Senate approval and Royal Assent for *Bill C-68 (An Act Respecting Firearms and Other Weapons* to create the *Firearms Act*) were granted on December 5, 1995.

Major changes included in Bill C-68:

- Creation of the *Firearms Act*, which took most administrative and most regulatory aspects of firearms control out of the *Criminal Code*;
- A new licensing system to replace the FAC system (with licenses being required to possess and acquire firearms, and to buy ammunition);
- Requirement for businesses to possess a valid license if they are to engage in activities related to firearms, other weapons, devices, and/or ammunition;
- The registration of all firearms, including rifles and shotguns; and
- *Criminal Code* amendments providing stricter penalties for certain serious crimes where firearms are used (for example: kidnapping, murder, etc.) and classifying all .25 and .32 caliber handguns, as well as those with a barrel length of 105mm or less, as prohibited firearms.

It is important to note that there was a transitional period allowing for gradual implementation of the law; individuals had until January 1, 2001 (five years), to obtain a firearm licence, and had until January 1, 2003 (seven years), to register their firearms.

The December 2002 report of the Auditor General raised concerns regarding program funding, management and reporting. This report was the key catalyst for the subsequent *Gun Control Action Plan*<sup>4</sup>. This plan was a blueprint for improving the Program's services, accountability and transparency. The Action Plan set out a number of proposed changes with respect to cost reduction and improved management; improved service to the public and to users of firearms; input from parliamentarians, stakeholders and the public; and strengthened accountability and transparency. All 16 Action Plan elements have been implemented since the plan was announced in 2003<sup>5</sup>.

On April 13, 2003, *Bill C10A, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Firearms) and the Firearms Act*, received Royal Assent. *Bill C10A* amended the *Firearms Act* in order to streamline processes, improve transparency and accountability and provide a mechanism for the ratification of international treaties related to firearms marking and importations.

The amendments included the appointment of a Commissioner of Firearms who would have overall responsibility for the administration of the program. On April 14, 2003, the Canadian Firearms Program was set up as an independent department within the portfolio of departments and agencies reporting to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC).

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca/media/news\\_releases/2003/feb21-2003/default\\_e.asp](http://www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca/media/news_releases/2003/feb21-2003/default_e.asp)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca/media/reports/Commissioner-Report/pdf/commissioner\\_report2003\\_e.pdf](http://www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca/media/reports/Commissioner-Report/pdf/commissioner_report2003_e.pdf), p. 30.

In May 2006, following the publication of the follow-up report by the Auditor General on the entire CFP, the Federal government transferred responsibility and administration of the *Firearms Act* and the CFP (previously including the Canada Firearms Centre (CAFC) and CFP) to the RCMP. The Commissioner of the RCMP assumed the duties of Commissioner of Firearms, and internally within the RCMP the CFP became a service line under the direction of the Deputy Commissioner of Policing Support Services (PSS).

On June 21, 2006, the Minister of Public Safety tabled *Bill C-21 An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act*. The intent of the proposed legislation was to amend the *Firearms Act* by repealing the requirement to register non-restricted firearms (i.e., long guns) and requiring firearms retailers to record all sales transactions of non-restricted firearms. Individuals would still be required to have a valid firearms license, go through police background checks and safety training, in order to purchase or possess firearms and to purchase ammunition. Individuals would also be required to register prohibited and restricted firearms, such as handguns, and all firearms owners would continue to be required to store their firearms safely. This bill was subsequently terminated when an election was called in 2008. A similar private member's *Bill C-301* was introduced in the House of Commons on February 9, 2009 and was later moved up to the Senate April 1, 2009 (*Bill S-5*). On May 15, 2009, another private member's bill (submitted through a different MP), *Bill C-391*, was introduced in the House of Commons.

## **Canadian Firearms Program - Overview**

The Canadian Firearms Program (CFP) is an operational service line within the RCMP's Policing Support Services. The CFP's strategic outcome is, "*Increased public safety through effective risk management of firearms and their users*". The Program's mission, mandate and core values, and commitment to "Safe Homes, Safe Communities" support four of the RCMP's strategic priorities: Organized Crime, Terrorism, Youth and Aboriginal Communities.

CFP provides direct support to all domestic and international police services relative to firearms registration information and licensing of individuals and businesses by providing police and other organizations with information and expertise vital to the prevention and investigation of firearms crime and misuse in Canada and internationally. This information helps distinguish between legal and illegal firearms, as well as lawful and unlawful owners and trafficking of firearms. CFP works with the provinces and territories, with national organizations that have an ongoing interest in firearms safety and with many firearms and hunter education instructors across Canada, in promoting safe storage, display, transportation and handling of firearms. CFP and Aboriginal organizations work together on projects at national, regional and local levels to deliver safety training, firearms verification and license and registration assistance.

### **Mission**

In concert with the RCMP's mission statement of "Safe Homes, Safe Communities", the CFP's mission is to:

- support judicial and law enforcement organizations;
- prevent the misuse of firearms in Canada; and
- enhance public safety by helping reduce death, injury and threat from firearms through responsible ownership, use and storage of firearms.



The RCMP continues to develop and oversee the regulation of firearms for the purpose of reducing meeting the CFP's obligations under the *Firearms Act*. The CFP is intended to promote public safety through a process involving the effective risk management of firearms and their users by:

- controlling the acquisitions, possession and ownership of firearms;
- regulating certain types of firearms; and
- supporting law enforcement agencies in preventing and investigating firearm crimes and incidents.

### Core Activities

The Canadian Firearms Program (CFP) is a multi-departmental and multi-jurisdictional program for which the RCMP has the lead responsibility. The core activities of the Program are shown in the following diagram:



Effective delivery of the CFP depends upon partnerships involving the federal and provincial governments and law enforcement agencies. Federal partners such as Public Safety Canada (PSC), Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Foreign

Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) play a key role in the administration and delivery of the CFP, as do the provincial Chief Firearms Officers (CFO). Appendix A provides a brief overview of the role of the above partners within the CFP.

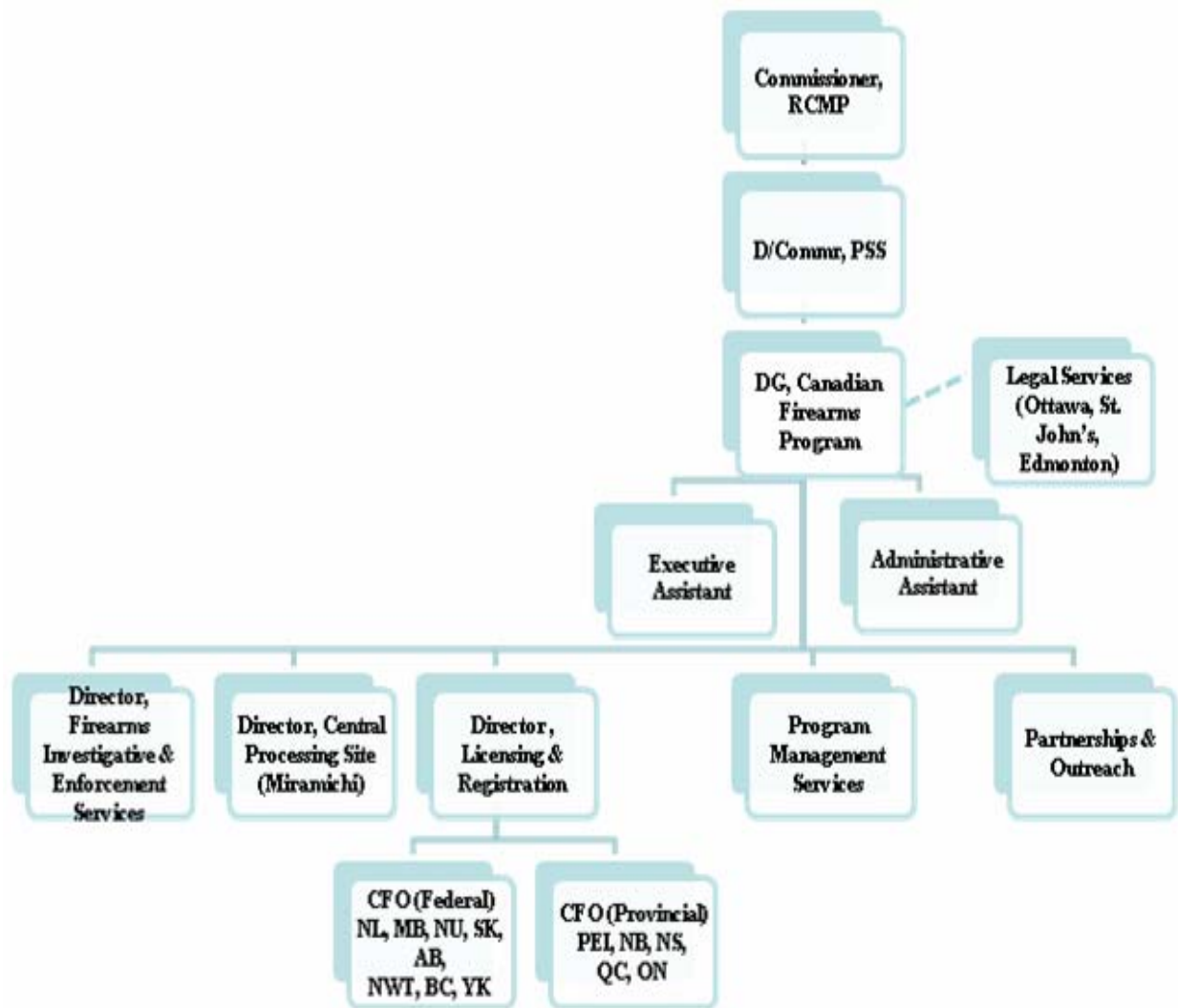
Under the provisions of the *Firearms Act*, provinces/territories can choose to deliver and administer the CFP. The provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia administer responsibilities within their jurisdictions through a provincially appointed CFO. Some provinces/territories chose not to administer the CFP and, subsequently, did not appoint a provincial CFO. As a result, these provinces and territories have a federally appointed CFO. Currently, Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba, Nunavut, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Northwest Territories, British Columbia, and the Yukon are administered by federally appointed CFOs.

In the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, program operations are funded by the Firearms Funding Program through contribution agreements entered into between the Government of Canada and individual provinces (see Appendix B for a breakdown of contribution agreements by province). The RCMP also works with Aboriginal and other community organizations to further the understanding of, and compliance with, program requirements. These efforts are also funded through contribution agreements.

### **Organization of the CFP**

As noted earlier, the Commissioner of the RCMP is also the Commissioner of Firearms. Operationally, the Director General of CFP reports to the Deputy Commissioner of Policing Support Services (PSS). CFP Headquarters' operations and the Canadian Firearms Registry are located in the National Capital Region. Regionally, Chief Firearms Officers' (CFOs) operations are located within each province, five administered by federally appointed CFOs (NL, SK; MB&NV; AB&NWT; and BC&YK) and five administered by provincially appointed CFOs. The Central Processing Site (CPS) is located in Miramichi, New Brunswick, and processes applications for licenses. Legal counsel is provided for the CFP by the Department of Justice in Ottawa National Headquarters, Edmonton, Alberta and in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

## Canadian Firearms Program Organization Structure<sup>6</sup>



<sup>6</sup> The organizational chart was updated in 2009.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The *Firearms Act* and its regulations, specifically the *Firearms Records Regulations*, establish the basic framework for the Canadian Firearm Information System (CFIS) which is administered by the RCMP. It is the official repository for license and registration information for the CFP. The Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) interfaces with CFIS to provide timely information to CFOs making decisions about client licensing and continuous eligibility, and to police officers enforcing the *Criminal Code of Canada*. The Canadian Firearms Registry On-line (CFRO) is a subset of CFIS. CFRO is available to Canadian police agencies via CPIC to assist police officers responding to calls and conducting investigations. Firearms records regulations facilitate more effective enforcement. This information helps police and other public-safety officials carry out criminal and other public safety-related investigations effectively by quickly tracing a firearm to its last legal owner and facilitating the recovery and return of lost or stolen firearms to their rightful owner.

The CFP provides the following services to all program partners:

- a national telephony network, application processing and CFIS;
- systems administration services (e.g. information technology security);
- program user hardware and software; and,
- centralized administrative services through the Central Processing Site, the Registrar of Firearms and the accreditation unit.

The Central Processing Site offers the following services:

- licensing and registration application processing services;
- data entry of safety training course reports;
- printing of privilege documents and administrative notices;
- records management services for centrally processed applications;
- fee management services for centrally processed applications; and,
- public information management services via the federal 1-800 number, CFP website and mail.

The CFOs (both federal and provincial) are responsible for:

- designating Firearms Officers (FO);
- designating Inspectors;
- designating Canadian Firearms Safety Course (CFSC) and Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course (CRFSC) instructors / examiners;

- licensing (related to individuals, businesses, shooting clubs and ranges, and minors) and continuous eligibility activities (including secondary investigations<sup>7</sup>, final licensing decisions, and reference hearings, if required);
- receiving, data entering and client-matching all court orders reported to the CFO under the Act;
- transfer approvals and refusals with respect to restricted and prohibited firearms;
- conducting spousal notifications in some cases<sup>8</sup>;
- approving, refusing and revoking shooting clubs and shooting ranges, where authority is delegated by the Minister;
- regular inspections and/or audit of businesses and organizations (including shooting clubs and ranges);
- issuance of authorizations (to transport, to carry, and special authority to possess);
- issuing, refusing and revoking gun show sponsorship approvals (not yet in force); and,
- providing assistance to police agencies, affidavits for court purposes, attendance as witnesses, and attendance at appeal hearings.

The Registrar is the official appointed to head the Canadian Firearms Registry (CFR) and is responsible for:

- firearms registration for individuals and businesses;
- business import and export authorizations (not yet in effect due to capacity issues; DFAIT and CBSA currently managing);
- licenses for inter-provincial or international carriers;
- providing firearm technical assistance;
- identifying and classifying firearms;
- providing assistance to police agencies with firearm tracing, court affidavits, witness appearance and reference hearings;

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<sup>7</sup> Secondary screening involves the analysis of “hits”, or potential matches to Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) records that have not been excluded automatically by the Accreditation System or excluded manually by the Accreditation Unit staff of the Canadian Firearms Registry. The potential matches reviewed are a result of accreditation performed on a new licence application or continuous eligibility screening performed on those who already hold a valid firearms licence. Secondary screening consists of obtaining additional information on the potential matches to CPIC records by querying regional police incident-reporting databases, court or provincial databases, and by contacting police, other agencies or individuals directly for information (as per CPIC services policy).

<sup>8</sup> In those cases where there is no current/former spouse or common law partner signature or where contact information is incomplete.

- maintaining a National Verifiers Network;
- maintaining the firearms inventories of Public Agencies; and,
- maintaining CFIS data.

## Resources

The spending for the CFP for 2008-2009 was 86.5M (see Table 1). The planned utilization of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees is 427.

**Table 1: CFP Planned spending and FTEs for fiscal year 2008-2009.**

2008/09					
	Total Planned Spending (\$millions)	Salaries (\$millions)	O&M (\$millions)	Contributions (\$millions)	FTEs
Non-Registration costs	48.4	28.8	19.6	N/A	297
Registration costs	22.3	13.3	9.0	N/A	130
Contributions	15.8	N/A	N/A	15.8	N/A
	86.5	42.1	28.6	15.8	427

In response to Recommendation 4.27 of the May 2006 Auditor General Report on the CFP<sup>9</sup>, direct and indirect costs are defined as follows:

- *Direct Costs:* represent those reimbursed by CFP to its partners for services/activities provided in support of the Program and agreed upon through a Memorandum of Agreement.
- *Indirect Costs:* certain costs of the CFP incurred by federal partners that are not reimbursed by CFP (see Auditor General Report – Definitions). Indirect costs can be sub-divided into two categories: those costs incurred and not reimbursed by the Program. An example would be collective bargaining salary increases that are passed on to departments by Treasury Board or, overhead costs for ministerial or infrastructure support. Secondly, indirect costs can be those that are received without charge such as accommodation and employee benefits to, for example, the Public Service Dental Plan.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/reports.nsf/html/20060504ce.html#ch4hd3a>

**Table 2: Direct and Indirect costs incurred by the CFP/RCMP and federal partners in the administration of the CFP.**

Organization (\$ millions)	Past Expenditure (1995-1996 2006-2007)	to Actual 2007-2008 Expenditures	Actual 2008-2009 Expenditures	Planned Spending 2009-2010	Planned Spending 2010-2011
<i>Direct Costs:</i>					
Canada Firearms Program	726.1	47.6	50.8	78.3	76.4
Royal Canadian Mounted Police*	117.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Other Federal Government Departments (costs reimbursed by CFP):</b>					
Canada Border Services Agency	22.3	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.7
Department of Justice	2.0	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8
Public Works and Government Services Canada	1.8	0.9	0.8	0.0	0.0
Human Resources Development Canada**	32.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transfer payments to Provinces	202.0	12.5	13.6	14.2	14.2
Contribution payments to Aboriginal Communities, Other Communities	2.0	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.3
<b>Total Direct Costs:</b>	<b>1,106.1</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>76.5</b>	<b>76.5</b>

\* Reflects direct costs reimbursed by DOJ/CFP prior to May 17, 2006 to the RCMP. Starting with 2006-2007, direct and indirect costs incurred by the RCMP in support of the Firearms Program will be included within CFP's direct operating costs.

\*\* HRSDC no longer provides support services to the CFP for the Central Processing Site in Miramichi, N.B.

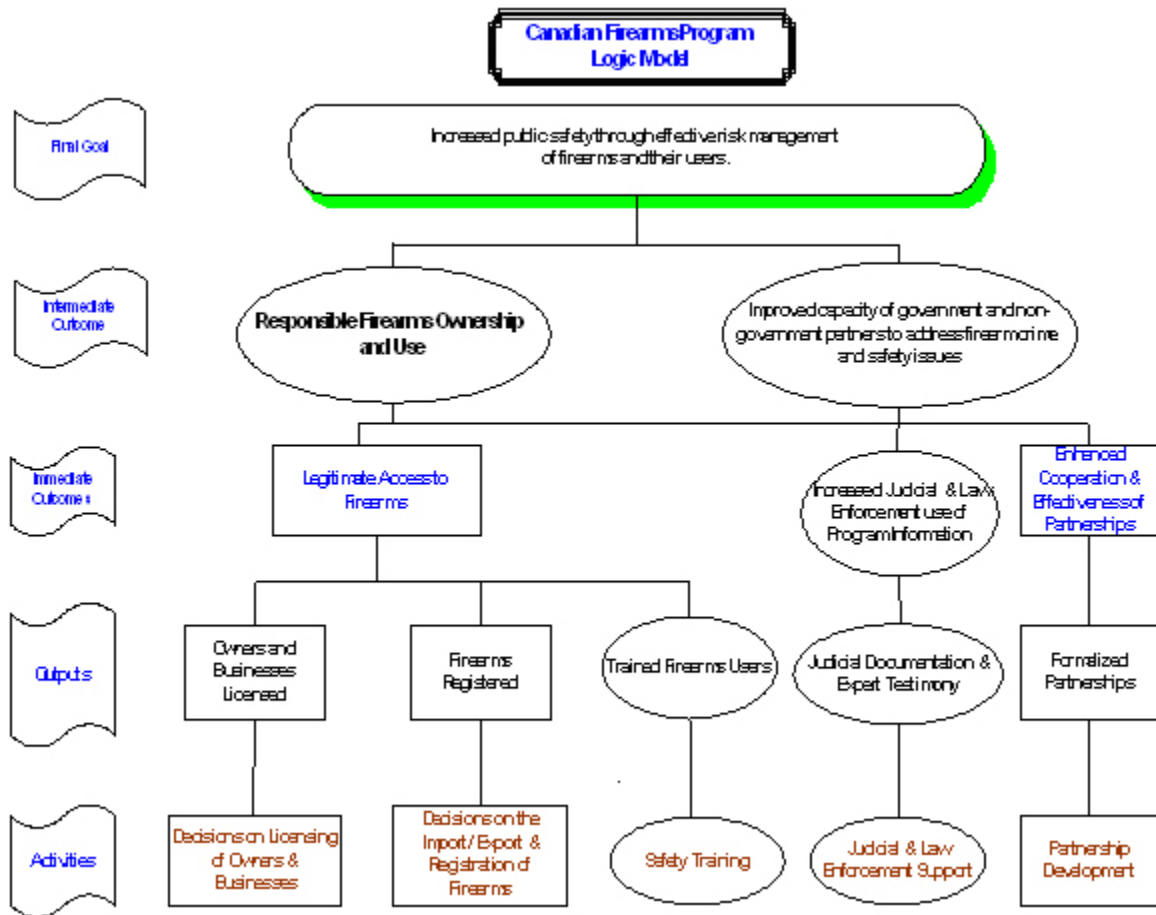
<b>Costs not reimbursed by Canada Firearms Centre:</b>					
<b>Public Safety &amp; Emergency Preparedness Canada</b>	1.5	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3
<b>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</b>	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Royal Canadian Mounted Police – NWEST</b>	8.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Canada Border Services Agency</b>	7.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Correctional Service Canada</b>	45.5	9.4	9.3	9.3	9.3
<b>National Parole Board</b>	6.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
<b>Department of Justice</b>	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>International Trade Canada</b>	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Public Works &amp; Government Services Canada</b>	16.9	1.9	1.7	2.1	2.0
<b>Other</b>	11.0	1.7	2.0	2.0	2.0
<b><i>Total Indirect Costs:</i></b>	112.6	14.1	14.2	14.6	14.5
<b>Total Program Costs</b>	1,218.7	76.4	90.7	91.1	91.0
<b><i>Net Revenues (1)</i></b>	(128.4)	(7.1)	(22.2)	(24.6)	(24.6)
<b>Net Program Costs</b>	1090.3	69.3	68.5	66.5	66.4

- (1) Revenues are credited to the Consolidated Revenue Fund and are not available as offsets to expenditures.
- (2) Note: Please refer to Table on Horizontal Initiatives for explanations of expected results, planned spending and indirect costs not reimbursed by CFP reported by the Program's federal partners to substantiate estimated planned spending requirements related to the delivery of their portion of the Firearms Program. Expenditures are rounded to the nearest one hundred thousand, e.g. \$75,000 is rounded up to \$0.1 million, and \$45,000 is rounded down to \$0.0 million.



# Logic Model

The following logic model, developed by CFP, depicts the chain of results, connecting primary activities of the CFP in administering the CFP's associated outputs and expected outcomes. Definitions found in RMAF 2007.



## Findings and Recommendations

### Relevance

#### Finding 1:

- **There is an ongoing need for the Canadian Firearms Program to promote public safety through the regulation of firearms.**

Currently, there are 6.5 million non-restricted firearms (long guns) and 0.5 million restricted firearms (mostly handguns), with almost 2 million Canadians holding valid licenses<sup>10</sup>. Regulating the use of firearms through the Canadian Firearms Program continues to be an appropriate approach to promoting the public safety and security of Canadians. There is a divergence between the legal and public policy approaches to promoting public safety through the regulation of firearms use. Nevertheless, there is an agreement that supports the ongoing need for regulating the use of firearms in some form.

The program is often misperceived by the media and the public as being solely a registry. The administration of this national public safety program might better be compared with a provincial Motor Vehicles Branch, which is also involved in safety training, licensing and registration and is an important resource to law enforcement, albeit in a limited nature, through license revocations. An added difference is the concern for the misuse of firearms, which impacts on public safety and hence the requirement for regulation.

There continues to be public safety threats in Canada caused by both the deliberate and accidental misuse of firearms, mostly through non-restricted firearms (long guns). Safety certification is a prerequisite for licensing of firearm owners and users. Firearms safety courses test an individual's knowledge of firearms and their safe use, and emphasize one's responsibility for the safe handling, transport and storage of firearms. Safety screening processes restrict access to firearms to those individuals who do not pose a safety risk to themselves or to the public. More generally, the regulation of firearms provides for greater accountability for the firearm.

As noted earlier, the CFP was previously part of the Department of Justice, and is now managed by the RCMP. The Firearms Registry is a useful tool for law enforcement, providing:

- **Officer safety:** It ensures police are better equipped to respond to, for example, a situation of domestic violence, assess potential safety risks and confirm the possible presence of firearms and their legal status.
- **Investigative support:** (tracing firearms, Affidavits to support prosecutions) Police would otherwise have to search manually through thousands of retail records to find the source of any firearm recovered at a crime scene. Computerized and centralized registration provide

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<sup>10</sup> Commissioner of Firearms Report, 2007

for quick searches. If stolen, knowing the source of the firearm provides police with a valuable starting point for their investigation.

- Improved public safety: (seizure of firearms in situations of domestic or mental health breakdown) People can be negatively affected by a number of factors, including job loss, divorce or other forms of socio-economic or psychological stress, that may increase the risk of firearms misuse. .

There is legal support for the relevance of the CFP in promoting public safety. In response to public safety concerns of the time, the *Firearms Act* was introduced February 14, 1995, and Royal Assent granted on December 5, 1995. The *Act* included several significant changes to previous legislation with the aim of promoting public safety and security. Personal safety was emphasized through the creation of a new licensing system, emphasizing skills and safety training, to replace the previous FAC system. Public safety was emphasized through *Criminal Code* amendments providing harsher penalties for certain serious crimes where firearms are used. Furthermore, issues surrounding public and police officer safety were addressed in two significant ways: by requiring the possession of a valid license to possess and acquire firearms and to buy ammunition; and, the registration of all firearms, including shotguns and rifles. These changes, however, met with significant controversy: mandatory registration and licensing, for instance, was viewed by many gun owners as an infringement on personal freedom and the criminalization of law-abiding citizens; whereas, from a legal perspective, there was concern as to whether the federal government could regulate personal property, thereby infringing on the federal-provincial division of powers as established in the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

In 1999, the government of Alberta, with the support of five other provinces and the territories, submitted a Reference Question to the Alberta Court of Appeal on this last issue. In its response to the question, the Alberta Court of Appeal wrote that the purpose of the *Act* is to protect “*public safety from the misuse of ordinary firearms. This is to be accomplished through a simple but compelling concept - individual responsibility and accountability for one’s ordinary firearms. This is a small price to pay for the privilege of being allowed to possess and use a dangerous weapon.*”<sup>11</sup> This was appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada in 2000.

In *Reference re Firearms Act (Can.)*, [2000] 1 S.C.R. 783, 2000 SCC 31, the Supreme Court of Canada held that requiring the licensing and registration of firearms was a valid exercise of the federal criminal law power, as:

*“The law in "pith and substance" is directed to enhancing public safety by controlling access to firearms through prohibitions and penalties. This brings it under the federal criminal law power. While the law has regulatory aspects, they are secondary to its primary criminal law purpose. ... while ordinary guns are often used for lawful purposes, they are also used for crime and suicide, and cause accidental death and injury. Guns cannot be divided neatly into two categories – those that are dangerous and those that are not dangerous. All guns are capable of being used in crime. All guns are capable of killing and maiming. It follows that all guns pose a threat to public safety. As such, their control falls within the criminal law power”.*

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<sup>11</sup> In the Alberta Court of Appeal Ref: Firearms Act, 1998 ABCA 305, P60&64

The Court further argued that the Program, as designed with a licensing and registration component, contributed to public safety. The Court stated:

*The combination of the two parts of the scheme is intended to ensure that when a firearm is transferred from one person to another, the recipient is licensed. Absent a registration system, this would be impossible to ascertain. If a gun is found in the possession of an unlicensed person, the registration system permits the government to determine where the gun originated. With a registration scheme in place, licensed owners can be held responsible for the transfer of their weapons.... If someone is found guilty of a crime involving violence, or is prohibited from possessing a weapon, the registration scheme is expected to assist the police in determining whether the offender actually owns any guns and in confiscating them.*

*The registration scheme is also intended to reduce smuggling and the illegal trade in guns. These interconnections demonstrate that the registration and licensing portions of the Firearms Act are both tightly linked to Parliament's goal in promoting safety by reducing the misuse of any and all firearms. Both portions are integral and necessary to the operation of the scheme.*

Later, in *R. v. Wiles*, [2005] 3 S.C.R. 895, 2005 SCC 84, regarding the use of firearms, the Court found that: the state interest in reducing the misuse of weapons is valid and important; the possession and use of firearms is not a right or freedom guaranteed under the *Charter*, but a privilege; and it is also a heavily regulated activity, requiring potential gun owners to obtain a licence before they can legally purchase one.

Combined, the three court decisions support Canadian democratic values and the social contract whereby the state is obliged to protect citizens (through regulation and criminal law, in this case), and in return, citizens have a responsibility to the state. In this process, some of its members may experience limitations in individual liberties in lieu of all citizens gaining collective liberties. These decisions have also established the legal basis for the ongoing relevance of the CFP, in that the program employs a specific licensing and regulatory regime to promote public safety.

While the legal basis for establishing the relevance of the Canadian Firearms Program is unanimous, the policy basis for maintaining the Program in its current form is changing. Although the licensing aspect of the program is still being supported, efforts have recently been made to change the registration portion of the program. The current Government of Canada maintains a priority of “focusing on effective measures to tackling crime that will protect families and communities” and on “*keeping Canadians Safe*”.<sup>12</sup> This rationale was behind the government decision to transfer the responsibility of the CFP to the RCMP on May 17, 2006, as well as the creation of a temporary legal amnesty which shielded certain firearm owners from prosecution of offences related to non-registration of their long guns to give them time to comply with the law a year later. In June, 2006, the Government officially declared its position on the relevance of the registry portion of the CFP, by tabling legislative amendments to repeal the requirement to register non-restricted firearms. The Minister for Public Safety Minister stated, “counting and tracking every long gun in Canada has been ineffective and costly, and has distressed law-abiding taxpayers who must complete endless amounts of paperwork.”<sup>13</sup> Subsequent to this, Bill C-21, an act to amend the *Criminal Code* and the *Firearms*

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<sup>12</sup> Speech from the Throne, 2008 <http://www.sft-ddt.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1380>

<sup>13</sup> Conservative Party of Canada, 2006. <http://www.conservative.ca/EN/1091/43647>

*Act* (non-registration of firearms that are neither prohibited nor restricted) was tabled but subsequently died when an election was called in 2008. On May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007 an extension of the amnesty was announced and has now been extended until May 16, 2010.

In the Speech from the Throne in 2008, the Government committed to, “*Keeping Canadians Safe*” stating that “in times of uncertainty as in times of prosperity, Canadians need to be assured that they are safe in their homes and communities.” With respect to the issues surrounding firearms and public safety, the Government signaled that its policy priorities in the Parliamentary session were focused on ending gun smuggling and stronger penalties for gun crimes, and “not at criminalizing law-abiding firearms owners”. This latter point is generally understood to mean changing the registration aspect of the CFP to remove the obligation for gun owners to register their non-restricted long guns. On April 1, 2009, the issue was put to the Senate of Canada Bill, where *S-5*, the *Long-Gun Registry Repeal Act* received its first reading. At that time, in the House of Commons, the Minister of Public Safety declared that “there is a growing consensus that the gun registry has been ineffective in reducing crime,” emphasizing the current government’s policy priority of eliminating the registration of long guns.

At the program level, the CFP continues to be aligned with the RCMP’s Strategic Priorities, which are, in turn, aligned with the RCMP’s overall goal to achieve *Safe Homes, Safe Communities*, focusing on three major strategic outcomes: quality federal policing, contract policing and policing support services, in support of its five strategic priorities: organized crime, terrorism, youth, economic integrity and Aboriginal communities. The CFP’s stated outcomes in the logic model are: to increase public safety through effective risk management of firearms and their users, through improved capacity of government and non-government partners to address firearm crime and safety issues, and responsible firearms ownership and use.

### **Recommendation 1:**

- **That the Canadian Firearms Program continue to be responsible for the promotion of public safety through a process which involves the effective risk management of firearms and their users.**

## Finding 2:

- **The Canadian Firearms Program as a public safety-oriented regulatory framework, is continuing toward achieving its strategic outcome of reducing firearm-related harm.**

Recently compiled statistics initiated by this evaluation, data from Statistics Canada and all of the Provincial and Territorial Coroners indicate notable decreases of firearm deaths (approximately 12%) in Canada between 2001 and 2004. The findings are limited to four years as several of the Coroners only provided limited data. All of the Coroners had been encouraged to provide twenty years of data and the majority came close to this or exceeded it.

Suicides were the principal cause of death (approx 79%) in 2001, which continued to decline to 76% in 2004. These were mostly inflicted using long guns. Homicides rose by 3% over the same period from 19-22%. Accidental deaths, though nominal, were on the decline. There are other social and legal changes which may have contributed to the changes in mortality rate. However, the analysis of those factors and their impacts are beyond the scope of this evaluation.

**Chart 1**  
**Firearm Deaths in Canada**

Year	<sup>1</sup> Homicides			<sup>2</sup> Suicides			<sup>2</sup> Accidental			Total Homicide suicide and accidental
	Handgun (% of total)	Long-gun	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other, unspecified	Handgun	Long-gun	Other, unspec.	
2004	* 112- 14%	52- 7%	9	88- 11%	475- 61%	29	1	14- 2%	0	780
2003	110- 15%	45- 6%	6	95- 13%	451- 60%	14	4- 1%	12- 2%	10	747
2002	98- 12%	46- 5%	8	92- 11%	553- 66%	25	8- 1%	9- 1%	2	841
2001	110- 12%	53- 6%	8	106- 12%	569- 64%	25	3	17- 2%	0	891

\* First number denotes number of deaths. Second percentage is in relation to total homicide, suicide& accidental deaths, in the far right column.

1. Firearm homicide source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey

2. Firearm suicide and accidental death source: Chief Provincial and Territorial Coroners from across Canada

Longguns had been used in 72% of the firearm deaths in 2001. This decreased to 69% of deaths by 2004. Handguns by comparison were used in 25% of the deaths in 2001. This increased to 26% in 2004.<sup>14</sup>

As a national average, handguns are the preferred firearm for homicide; however long guns were used in approximately one-third of these instances. Handgun statistics are more reflective of major urban centres. Outside of the larger urban centres, and in cities and towns where the population is 100,000 or less, the firearm of choice is mostly the long gun. Recent findings also show that the spousal homicide rates have declined significantly, particularly with respect to long guns.

<sup>14</sup> 2004 is the last year for which the Evaluation team had obtained national data through the compilation of provincial coroner data. More recent data is available from specific provinces and territories in the Open Source statistical data section.

**Chart 2**

**Victims of Homicide Committed with Firearm  
Non-Census Metropolitan Area (Less than 100,000 population)  
(Excluding the Territories)**

Canada	Homicides					Total Shootings
Year	Handgun	Rifle Shotgun	Sawed-off rifle/shotgun	Fully automatic firearm	Unknown type	
2005	*15- 20%	45- 61%	4- 5%	1	9	74
2004	15- 33%	23- 50%	5- 11%	0	3	46
2003	15- 35%	22- 51%	6- 14%	0	0	43
2002	14- 27%	34- 65%	2- 4%	0	2	52
2001	21- 36%	32- 54%	4- 7%	1	1	59
2000	25- 38%	34- 52%	3- 5%	1	2	65
1999	22- 33%	39- 59%	2- 3%	1	2	66
1998	15- 26%	35- 61%	5- 9%	1	1	57
1997	22- 28%	50- 64%	3- 4%	0	3	78
1996	31- 33%	52- 55%	10- 11%	1	0	94

\* First number denotes number of deaths. Second percentage is in relation to total homicides with: handguns; rifle/shotgun; sawed off rifle/shotgun; fully automatic firearm; & unknown type firearm deaths, noted in the far right column.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

**Chart 3**

**Victims of Spousal Homicide Committed with Firearm  
by type of Firearm, Canada**

Year	Handgun	Rifle Shotgun	Other firearms	Total firearms	% Male Victims	% Female Victims
2007	1	6	2	9	0.0	100.0
2006	4	9	3	16	18.8	81.3
2005	4	14	3	21	4.8	95.2
2004	7	7	2	16	6.3	93.8
2003	7	12	4	23	8.7	91.3
2002	5	10	1	16	12.5	87.5
2001	6	12	1	19	5.3	94.7
2000	8	12	0	20	20	80.0
1999	5	17	1	23	4.3	95.7
1998	3	12	4	19	10.5	89.5
1997	8	17	2	27	14.8	85.2
1996	4	20	3	27	14.8	85.2

1. Spousal homicides are those that involve persons in legal marriages, those who are separated or divorced from such unions and those in common-law relationships (including same-sex spouses)

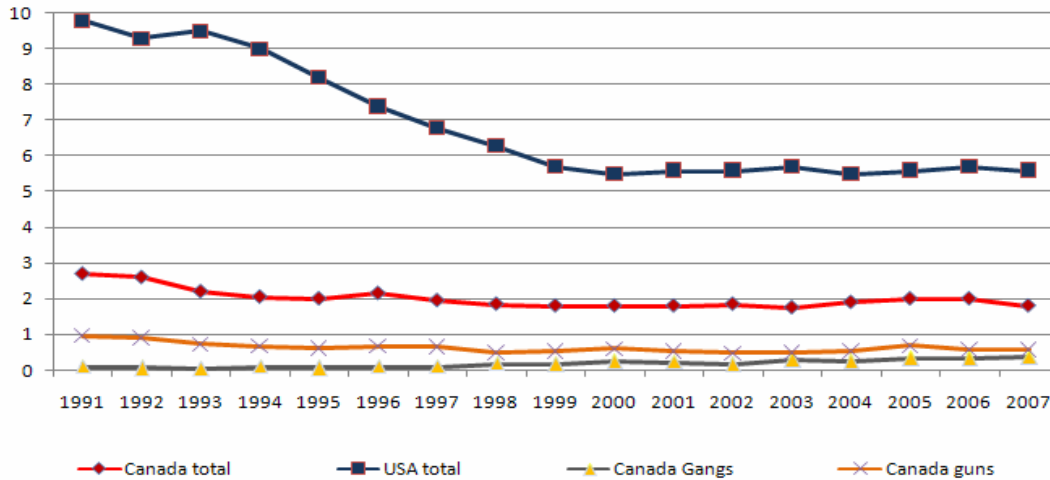
2. Other firearms include sawed-off rifle/shotguns, fully automatic weapons, firearm like weapons (ie nail-gun, pellet gun, etc) and firearms of unknown type.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey

The total Canadian homicide trends (red line) which include guns, knives etc - per 100,000 population are significant when compared to total gang homicides (grey line/bottom). Canadian homicides are significantly lower than the US homicide trends (blue line). Total Canadian firearm homicides, only involves firearms (orange line).

Chart 4

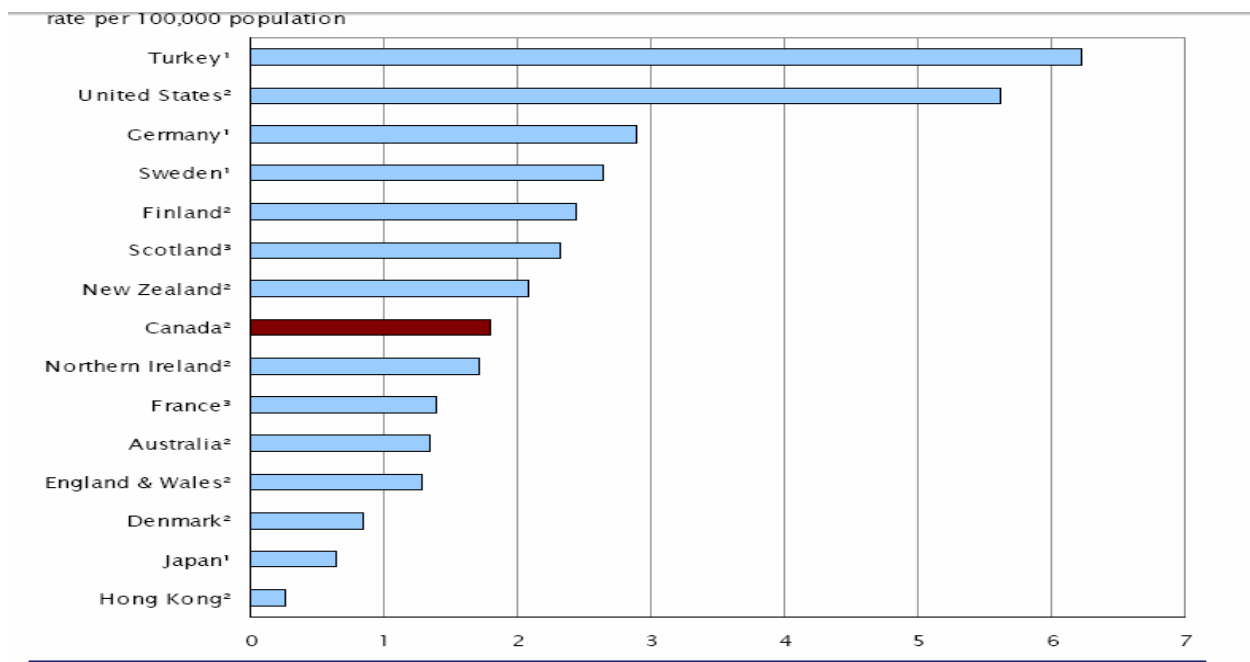
Homicide trends (per 100,000 population)<sup>15</sup>



<sup>15</sup> Canada, USA and Gangs include all types of homicide. “Canada guns” are firearm-related homicide, only



**Chart 5**  
**International Homicide<sup>16</sup>**



1. Figures reflect 2005 data.

2. Figures reflect 2007 data.

3. Figures reflect 2006 data.

Source: Statistics Canada, Interpol Ottawa and national statistical office websites.

<sup>16</sup> Figures reflect 2000 data (per 100,000 population)

The CFP's policy objectives are to reduce the firearms risks to the health and personal safety of Canadians; promote responsible ownership, use and storage of firearms; and, provide police and other organizations with expertise and information vital to the prevention and investigation of firearms crime both in Canada and internationally. With respect to the CFP and firearms users in 2007 there were:

- 1.8 million licensed individuals;
- over 7.0 million registered firearms;
- one million Possession Only Licences (POL);
- 800,000 Possession and Acquisition Licences (PAL);
- 6,000 Possession Licenses for Minors;
- Continuous eligibility checks identified over 97,000 potential public safety issues (Firearms Interest to Police);
- FIP hits led to 466 Licence Refusals and 1701 Licence Revocations;
- More than 84,000 individuals took firearms safety training;
- The Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line (CFRO) received an average of 6,900 queries per day.

Universal licensing and registration of firearms create an atmosphere of accountability. Knowing that individuals and businesses are accountable for their firearms and the use of them decreases the likelihood that an individual will misuse, traffic or commit a crime with a firearm. As well, continuous eligibility checks of firearms licence holders ensure that firearms are removed from people whose behaviour suggests that they might pose a threat to public safety.<sup>17</sup>

Continuous-eligibility screening is one of the most innovative features of the CFP. Rather than just doing background checks at the time of licensing and renewal (as was done under previous legislation), the CFRS is dynamic and continuously updated as new information comes to the attention of the police and courts concerning the behaviour of licence holders. All current holders of firearms licences, POL (Possession Only) and PAL (Possession and Acquisition of further firearms), are recorded in the Canadian Firearms Information System (CFIS). CFIS 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. All matches generate a report entitled Firearms Interest Police (FIP) that is automatically forwarded to the CFO in the relevant province for follow-up. Some of these reports require no further action, but others may lead to review of the individual's licence and may result in its revocation. . Continuous-eligibility screening reduces the likelihood that an individual who has shown they are a risk to public safety will be permitted to retain possession of firearms.

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<sup>17</sup> Email from CFP, October 2009.

**Number of confirmed FIP reports by province**

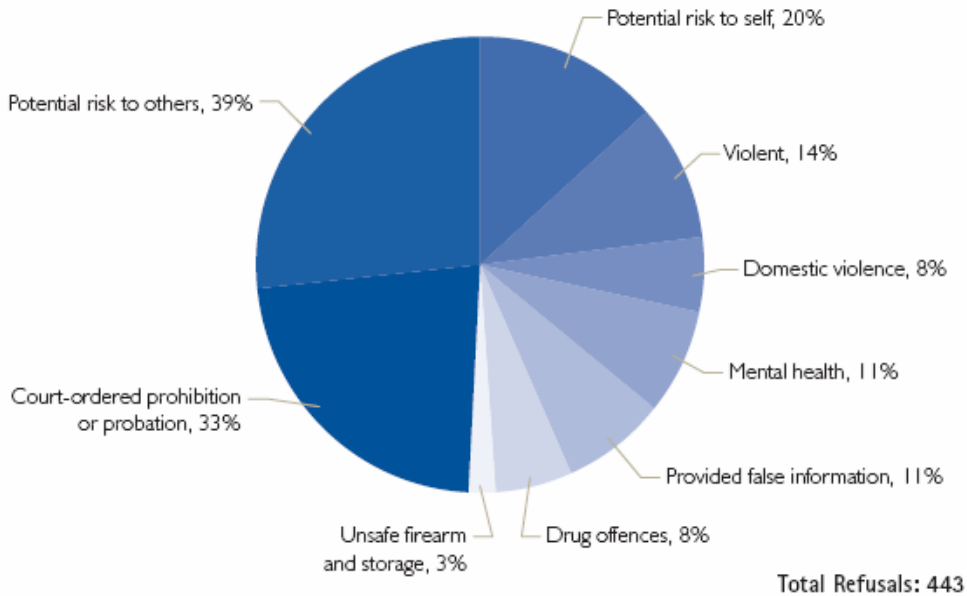
Province/Territory	2007		2007
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,116	Prince Edward Island	278
Nova Scotia	5,588	New Brunswick	3,671
Quebec	37,302	Ontario	19,924
Manitoba	4,348	Saskatchewan	2,877
Alberta	8,766	British Columbia	11,426
Yukon	273	Northwest Territories	216
Nunavut	589	Total	97,374

Licensing of an individual to possess firearms requires a variety of background checks. Applicants are screened to detect potential public safety risks based on information provided with a firearms licence application. Continuous eligibility screening is conducted over the term of the licence to identify any public safety risks that may arise over time. A licence may also be revoked following a court order or a Chief Firearms Officer's investigation resulting from a call to the CFP's Public Safety Line (1-800-731-4000). Reasons for licence refusals or revocations include: a history of violence, mental illness, potential risk to oneself or others, unsafe firearm use and storage, drug offences, and providing false information.

**Number of license refusals and revocations (by year)**

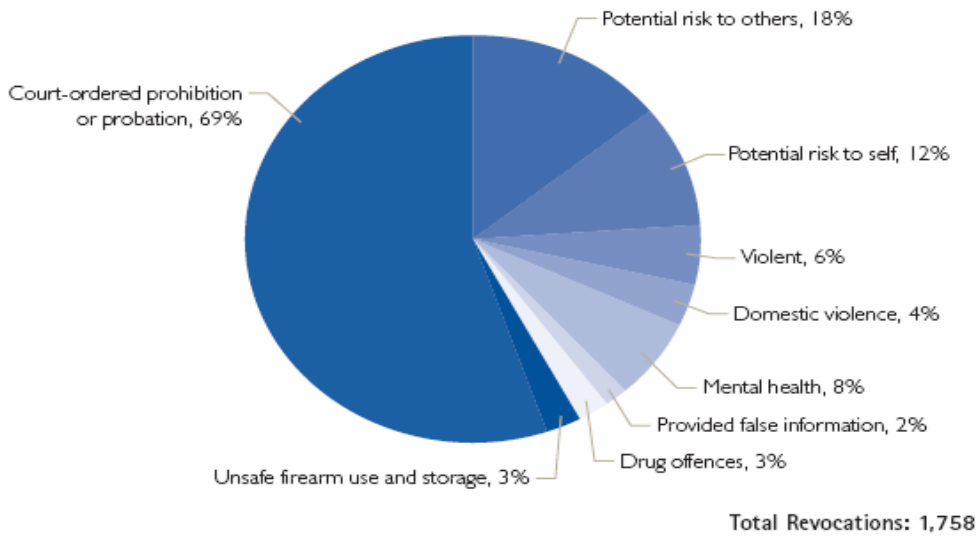
Year	Refusals	Revocations
2006	424	2093
2007	466	1701
2008	478	1800
2009	148	499

**Figure 10: Reasons For Licence Refusals**



Source: CFS

**Figure 11: Reasons For Licence Revocations**



Source: CFS

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

A large increase in revocations due to court-ordered firearms prohibitions resulted from an initiative to use CPIC for this data, and ensured that many thousands of individuals with criminal backgrounds, who would have escaped scrutiny under the old manual system, lost their privilege to possess firearms.

The Canadian Firearms Registry On-line (CFRO) is a subset of the Canadian Firearms Information System (CFIS). The system is available to Canadian police agencies via the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system to assist them when responding to calls and conducting investigations. As a searchable application, police officers may query the name, address and firearms licence number of an individual or other, firearm-related information such as the serial number or registration certificate number of a firearm. CFRO provides police with real-time access to the information they require in their investigative and operational activities.

#### **Average Daily Queries to the CFRO**

Type	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Individual Name	1,561	1,820	2,397	4,001	4,262	6,440	6,722
Address	27	42	1,434	2,268	2,364	2,574	2,606
Serial#	128	130	143	187	176	202	271
Other	95	95	117	136	172	197	207
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,811</b>	<b>2,087</b>	<b>4,091</b>	<b>6,592</b>	<b>6,974</b>	<b>9,413</b>	<b>9,806</b>

Police who use CFRO are able to get the information that they require to support their investigations. Individuals who demonstrate they are a safety risk to the public can be linked with the database of registered firearms owners, and firearms can be removed from the scenario. Police report that the Firearms Program and associated processing sites (Miramichi and CFO offices) have reduced the administrative burden placed on them (under the former firearms control legislation, they were responsible for licence screening).

A survey of CFRO users showed that 81% of trained police officers supported the statement, "In my experience, CFRO query results have proven beneficial during major operations." So beneficial, in fact, that RCMP dispatchers, RCMP Operational Communications Centres, Quebec Police agencies, Halifax Regional Police, Halton Regional Police, Canadian Military Police, OPP, Peel Regional Police, Toronto Police Service, West Vancouver Police Department and the Tsuu Tina Police Service have re-designed their Records Management Systems to auto-query CFRO whenever a police officer queries CPIC. Additionally, 513 RCMP detachments and federal units, 579 Canadian municipal police agencies and 88 OPP locations query CFRO yearly.

**Figure 15: Key findings of CFRO survey (Percentage of positive responses)**

	Participating Police CFRO-trained	Participating Police Not CFRO-trained	Participating Police Overall
Does your agency use the CFRO system?	98%	86%	92%
Do you use CFRO in your day-to-day functions?	78%	53%	65%
I use CFRO in responding to calls for service.	81%	65%	73%
CFRO query results influence the manner in which I handle calls for service.	73%	65%	69%
In my experience, CFRO query results have proven beneficial during major operations.	81%	68%	74%

Source: RCMP Survey Centre

The results of the survey confirm that trained general duty police officers value the information from CFRO and it has a significant impact on their day-to-day functions especially on service calls that could involve violence or firearms.

The Canadian Firearms Program provides direct support to all domestic and international law enforcement services relative to firearms registration information and licensing of individuals and businesses by providing law enforcement agencies and other organizations with information and expertise vital to the prevention and investigation of firearms crime and misuse in Canada and internationally. This information helps distinguish between legal and illegal firearms, as well as lawful and unlawful owners and trafficking of firearms.

CFP assists law enforcement, the policing community and Crown prosecutors by preparing affidavits that certify licensing or registration information related to individuals or firearms. Typically, affidavit requests are to determine what firearms an individual has registered to them, or to determine if a given firearm is registered. This certification is based on data maintained and controlled by both the CFO and the Registrar.

**Number of affidavits produced:**

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Affidavits#	1,150	2,260	2,400	3,374	3,606

In November 2008, Canadian police services and other public agencies started recording their service firearms, and all other firearms recovered, seized, or otherwise in inventory. This will enable users of the firearms registration database to find and track firearms recovered from crime scenes and at the borders, and generally allow for far better firearms intelligence analysis. Preliminary numbers from police agencies show that the majority of firearms seized since November 2008 are

non-restricted (79.7%). A search of the registration database showed that 46.5% of non-restricted firearms seized were registered.

The Public Agents Firearms Regulations came into effect on October 31, 2008. These regulations require all police services and all government departments and agencies to report firearms in their possession. As a result, the CFP is able to quantify and track the number of protected firearms within police and other public agencies. Additionally, information related to these firearms is available to police forces across the country to assist in their investigations via a central database.<sup>18</sup>

### Firearms in police custody

Firearms in custody	Non-restricted	Restricted	Prohibited	Total	Matched with registered firearm
Initial Inventory	17,379	4,345	1,882	23,606	5,953
Seized	11,196	2,044	801	14,041	6,058
Surrendered	3,881	1,534	545	5,960	2,529
Safekeeping	1,188	173	87	1,448	881
Found	411	136	43	590	98
Detained	238	24	10	272	152
Imported	30	9	7	46	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,323</b>	<b>8,265</b>	<b>3,375</b>	<b>45,963</b>	<b>15,681</b>

The initial inventory (23,606 firearms) refers to the number of firearms in police custody accounted for when the Public Agents Firearms Regulations came into effect October 31, 2008. The final inventory data (45,963) was reported August 31, 2009. Increases of 22,357 police-identified firearms have been seen in the 10 months following the program's implementation.

The Public Agents Firearms Regulations will have a direct impact on enforcement actions within Canada. The Firearms Operations and Enforcement Support Unit of the RCMP Canadian Firearms Program identifies real time, criminal trends and patterns regarding the criminal use of firearms and reports on this directly to front-line enforcement units in order to directly impact ongoing firearms investigations.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Canadian Firearms Program, Strategic Integration and Program Management Services, Report 9500, run 24Sep09

<sup>19</sup> 'Enforcement Support' FOES analysts will be able to identify at a glance which firearms are in illegal status in Canada and under what circumstances they were seized. Those firearms will be cross-referenced with trace and occurrence data obtained by NWEST and the Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre (CNFTC) and if appropriate will be submitted for tracing, the results of which are forwarded back to the agency of jurisdiction for action. This will be a critical first step in closing the tracing gap in Canada; the 'Public Agents' PAFR will allow the 'Enforcement Support unit' FOES to accurately report on ALL firearms seized by police and identify their origins. Furthermore, should the origin of a firearm not be traceable, the 'Enforcement Support unit' FOES will be in a position to determine the reason and report back to the agency of jurisdiction with recommendations.

Strategic engagement has been the focus for CFP through 2007/2008 and has been led by the Director General. Over 20 in-person presentations to Government and Police officials across the country were conducted, resulting in a wide spread recognition of the Program and thus an increase in the use of the CFRO tool of over 25%. Communication initiatives have been initiated throughout the year to keep clients and the public aware of not only the law, but also the program. Along with the strategic engagement initiative, these communications included pamphlets, mail outs, and manuals, and were a key contributor to meeting this priority.

**Number of registered firearms by class (as of March 31, 2009)**

- 1) **Non-restricted** : 6,690,792
- 2) **Restricted**            460,089
- 3) **Prohibited**            210,100

In terms of tracking firearms, the program continues to attract hundreds of thousands of new registrations each year, and enables investigators to trace firearms across every Canadian jurisdiction.

In 2006, approximately 75,000 individuals participated in either the Canadian Firearms Safety Course (CFSC) or the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course (CRFSC). During 2007, 84,918 individuals participated in both courses.

Looking at client service metrics, the average turnaround time for all firearms licences (POL and PAL) was 24 days in 2007. This is well below the published standard of 45 days. A small licence application work-in-progress remains, but consists of applications where elevated risk indicated further follow-up investigation was required.

The outreach program for Aboriginal communities, delivers hundreds of Aboriginal firearms safety courses each year. CFP worked with Aboriginal partners in 2007 to deliver over 260 firearms safety courses in 6 communities. Since 2001, 1500 safety courses have been delivered and 1700 safety test challenges supervised, in 30 Aboriginal communities.

Business Web Services were introduced three years ago to allow for on-line transfers of firearms registration. A firearm can now be transferred between eligible owners within minutes on-line. Further web-based services are being considered.

Firearms Licensing as a program activity has succeeded in creating a searchable relational database of nearly 2 million individuals in possession of firearms, which includes names, addresses and more recently references and spouses. This database is also linked to the Registry, so the actual firearms can be associated to the owner. Several hundred thousand transactions are processed each year, including address changes, five-year renewals, upgrades to PAL, upgrades to Restricted, Revocations, and appeals.

The Program not only impacts the 1.9 million Canadians who own firearms, it enhances the safety of all other Canadians who live in the same communities, by promoting safe use and storage of firearms. The requirement that all firearms must be registered and known to authorities supports a climate of individual accountability and public confidence, which in turn goes a long way toward ensuring the 30 million Canadians who do not own firearms to accept the privilege of others to do so.



**Telephone Calls Received at the CFP's Call Centre**

Year	Average Wait Time (seconds)	Total Number of Calls Received	Number of Calls Answered within 3 Minutes	Percentage
<b>2004</b>	116	501,582	379,321	<b>75</b>
<b>2005</b>	113	839,658	629,737	<b>74</b>
<b>2006</b>	159	1,146,880	749,612	<b>65</b>
<b>2007<sup>20</sup></b>	324	1,034,298	352,320	<b>34</b>
<b>2008</b>	124	964,492	684,291	<b>70</b>

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<sup>20</sup> NOTE: The above normal average wait time in 2007 was due to temporary human resource issues, relating to transition of the Program into the RCMP, and 2008 data shows this has returned to normal. [http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cfp-pcaf/facts-faits/archives/quick\\_facts/2008/2008-12-eng.htm](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cfp-pcaf/facts-faits/archives/quick_facts/2008/2008-12-eng.htm)

## Performance

### Finding 3:

- **Inconsistent and contradictory communications/outreach regarding the Canadian Firearms Program has led to confusion and misunderstanding among the general public and public safety officials.**

The on-going political debate around the value of Canadian Firearms Program has posed challenges for effective communication. As well, policy decisions, such as the proposed changes to the program made by the Government of Canada since 2006, including the amnesty provisions for long-gun owners, have contributed to confusion over the current status of the program and the onus to comply with existing regulations. A common gap perceived among interviewees is the lack of clear and consistent messaging. Employees of the CFP have stated in interviews that licensing compliance has been affected by political messages. While regional offices are able to communicate on strictly operational issues, some interviewees expressed frustration at the RCMP requirement to have communications products and activities on policy issues reviewed by headquarters, and in some instances others in the Public Safety portfolio or by central agencies. They also expressed frustration that some initiatives which would promote public compliance with firearms regulations have not received approval.

To a limited extent, communications are reaching their target audience of firearms owners, and services are being delivered. The Canadian Firearms Program has a 1-800 phone service to a national call centre for general enquiries. The call centre receives approximately one million calls per year from both business and individual clients. The CFP also has a website which provides detailed information to gun owners and businesses. The Ottawa-based CFP is responsible for national communication projects and also for responding to media inquiries. At present, they are responsible for performing this function on behalf of all the provinces and territories.

In 2008, the CFP created a strategic communications strategy to inform firearm owners and the general public about their rights, roles and responsibilities, and overall public safety issues with regard to firearms. Interviewees stated that this strategy was a necessity for the CFP in terms of sharing consistent and relevant information. A CFP-led policy decision was later made to focus the communication strategy on firearm owners and businesses, as it was not believed to be cost effective to go broadly to address Canadians. However, some CFP employees interviewed have the perception that the program does not adequately sell its value to public. Many recall extensive outreach and communication when the program first rolled-out – such as setting up booths in shopping malls in small communities, staffed by summer students – whereas currently, outreach is felt to be almost non-existent. There are also concerns among CFP officials that due to the lack of accessible information on the CFP, unreliable, incorrect information is being disseminated by unofficial sources. With limitations on the program's communications and outreach efforts, such misinformation goes unchallenged. Ultimately, this leads to greater confusion among the CFP's main clientele and the general public. This adversely affects the CFP's ability to manage the program.

For communication to and from firearm owners, the CFP had received substantial correspondence in the past from angry clients, many with concerns for their expired licenses. The program had intended to reach out to previous license holders with expired licenses, however the successive amnesties have served to expand their numbers exponentially. Program strategies include:

- simplifying the processes in which the CFP communicates with clients;
- marking renewal forms as RCMP mail to better encourage people to open their correspondence and comply;
- amending correspondence to make it seem less threatening;
- a ‘change of address’ initiative is underway, to help reduce the number of people whose licenses expire as a result of a move; and
- developing a web-based registration system for licensees .

Firearm businesses receive direct email updates from CFP, as the program is the major information distributor. Safety Instructors also receive information by email with a website link attached.

There is a further need to communicate that firearms are an important public safety issue. There is limited understanding and public confusion concerning gun owner obligations, responsibilities and facts surrounding the regulatory aspects of the program. A common misconception is that the Firearms Program is just the “Gun Registry”. This has resulted in a lack of compliance, and at times, hostility toward the program.

Repeated amnesties, which are in place for firearms owners who are actively in the process of complying with registration and licensing, are eroding the credibility of the regulatory system. There is a general belief amongst those interviewed that as a result of the amnesties they do not have to register or license their firearms. The fact that firearms owners believe that the Firearms program is nothing more than the registry make it difficult for the CFOs to enforce compliance and brings the entire CFP into question.

From an Aboriginal perspective, there are also limitations on communication. There exists a clear need for messaging from the Government to Aboriginal people regarding the status of the CFP. The public safety value of the program must be apparent to the Aboriginal population in order to increase participation. Communication needs to be culturally sensitive and available in languages appropriate to the communities in which it is being delivered. Where there is a widespread use of firearms in these communities, there is a real need for safety training as it is used and viewed as a necessary tool. There is also a need to involve Aboriginal persons in the delivery of the communications to assist in getting the message across. Likewise, involvement of youth and schools is seen as a viable method for delivering the messages, especially in the context of safety training.

There appears to be a generalized resistance among a number of gun owners, who as a vocal minority, feel the long gun registry is a waste of money. Some gun owners sense they became polarized by the public with the implementation of the firearms program. They felt that the program did not adequately consult with them during its development, and feel that they have been unfairly singled out by a few isolated incidents (school shootings) that would have been difficult to prevent anyway. Many of the firearm owners interviewed did not see the rationale for a long-gun registry because “criminals don’t register their firearms”. They are frustrated by the inconvenience of gun registration and want it eliminated, and divert funding to other uses. Firearm officers (FO) have expressed reluctance in attending firearm owner meetings as a result of the difficult reception; however, in order to become an effective program, this difficulty needs to be overcome with both firearms owners and the Aboriginal population by FO’s with the right competencies to perform the job. The CFP reports that the SQ (Sureté du Québec) has been exemplary in attending various

events to perform outreach. There have been a number of very positive comments coming from the firearm business men who generally support the program and its timely effective service, which provides good accounting practices for the tracing of firearms.

The CFP web-site is perceived by many as not being user friendly. The arrangement of information makes navigation too complex to find anything within a few “clicks”(seen as peeling layers of an onion). Many people interviewed indicated they were unfamiliar with the internet. There are significant generational factors which impede electronic access and communication approaches (ie. average age of a firearm owner in New Brunswick is 56 yrs). There was seen to be a need for more person to person outreach in lieu of utilizing the website or the telephone. The CFP needs to interface with and do more research into better understanding the clientele groups that are significantly impacted by firearms i.e Gun clubs, Schools, Victims of Violence, Aboriginal communities, Mental Health community etc. With a better understanding of these environments and their issues, the program can be improved further, gaining the confidence of these important stakeholders and allowing for more effective communications.

Within law enforcement and the judicial system, many employees do not fully understand firearms laws and regulations, contributing to a lack of enforcement. The inconsistent application and interpretation of the law by judicial and law enforcement partners, contributes to public confusion concerning obligations and responsibilities under the *Firearms Act*.

There is a perception among many interviewees (police, judicial and gun owners), that there is minimal understanding by law enforcement and judicial personnel concerning the CFP and firearm-related legislation, which is leading to minimal enforcement of the program<sup>21</sup>. There is little formalized training currently available to general duty police officers or crown prosecutors. Most of this is learned on the job or through contact with the CFP website and 1-800 number. As the website is not secure for police, it has little of the technical enforcement information that is needed for police attending incidents where guns are potentially in play. They need to be comfortable in knowing best practices and their authorities for search and seizure. Much work is being done to deal with guns and gangs, however there also needs to be more work done for the front line officers. Development of a firearms investigators course is in order front line police officers. There are very experienced people with technical expertise within Justice and the police community (ie NWEST, some CFOs and some senior Crowns) and it needs to be better shared, and consistent from province to province. Interviewees identified a need for additional training and reference material for law enforcement, CFO's and Crown prosecutors. As well, the major centers would benefit from a dedicated Crown counsel for *Firearms Act* offences for prosecution and as a resource expert. (i.e. Ontario have a Crown Lawyer operating out of the CFO Office)

There is a need for stronger links to be developed with the medical community (looking after physical and mental health) and work to develop formal and informal agreements wherever possible, as has been done in British Columbia. For instance, there is a perception among a number of interviewees that stronger links need to be developed with the ‘mental health community’ and protocols could be established with mental health physicians and workers, to make appropriate

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<sup>21</sup> It is worth noting that in nearly all interviews conducted with RCMP officers, the interviewees indicated they were not very well informed about the Firearms Act, the Program, or about changes in regulations surrounding firearms. To this end, the CFP has for instance included a “Special Bulletins for Police” page on its website specifically to inform law enforcement agencies of legislative changes to the relevant legislation.

contacts on imminent and potential concerns of patients at risk to themselves or others (with firearm access). Police in BC seem to be addressing this issue well.<sup>22</sup> More outreach could also be done with violence and school-related associations.

### **Recommendation 2:**

- **That the RCMP provide clear and consistent communications to Canadians on firearms and related public safety issues, adapted to the local level and using local mediums. Communications should be robust and targeted to the firearms community, but should also focus on other key stakeholders, including law enforcement, CFO's and judicial partners, which are impacted by firearms and the CFP**

### **Recommendation 3:**

- **That the RCMP contribute to the development of a training program for justice, police, and CFO's on the CFP and firearm-related legislation, and assess the impact of privacy issues on the program, all to better promote public safety as the primary mandate. Develop a secure website for police, Justice and CFO's to stay current with relevant information for investigators and Crown, with reference to: powers of search & seizure; warrants (best practices); MOU's for Mental Health, etc..**

### **Recommendation 4:**

- **That the RCMP's website be developed into a more user friendly environment and target the general public, young and old in Canada's official and predominant indigenous languages regarding firearms. This is particularly relevant for people in isolated communities where the internet is available.**

### **Finding 4**

- **Safety Training is believed to have resulted in safer handling, storage and use of firearms. The Program recognizes the need to continuously improve the delivery of the program through updating courses and the need to address specific concerns of the firearms community, including First Nations and Inuit populations.**

Safety training is delivered as part of the CFP's Firearms Safety Education and Awareness program, the mandate of which is "to provide dedicated management and expertise needed to implement and to administer a firearms safety education and awareness program in a positive, proactive and professional manner in order to instill in the general public a continuing sense of responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others". In executing this mandate, this evaluation has found that the CFP has been successful in promoting the safer usage, handling and storage of firearms across

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<sup>22</sup> Contemporary Policing Guidelines for Working with the Mental Health System, Chief of Police Terry Coleman Jul, 2006; Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Team (IMCRT) Review of Pairing Police with Mental Health Outreach Services, Vancouver Island Health Authority, Sept 2005; Study in Blue and Grey- Police Interventions with People with Mental Illness: A review of Challenges and Responses, Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division; Sample MOU between (A Mental Health Emergency Services Agency) and (A police Agency) Regarding the Disclosure of Information, Cited legislative authority is specific to B.C.; Federal Leadership, Part V *Out of the Shadows at Last* – Chapter 13"

the country. A majority of interviewees perceived an improvement in the safe handling, use and storage of firearms attributable to the safety components of the CFP. From a statistical perspective, five of eight jurisdictions have reported that the rate of firearms-related unintentional deaths has declined; and five of thirteen jurisdictions reported a similar decline in firearms-related suicides.<sup>23</sup>

Interviewees from all of the categories – from CFP officials, to Police Officers, to Firearms Instructors and Gun Club Owners – commented on the ongoing need for, and benefits of, the safety training aspects of the program. As a police officer in New Brunswick stated, “...[just] like for a drivers license, you should have appropriate training before receipt of a license.” This comment reflects, broadly, the overall attitude among those who come into contact with firearms: that personal responsibility for the safe use and handling of firearms rests with individuals; and, public safety is promoted when individuals are trained to properly use and store their firearms. This holds true in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, even though there remain outstanding treaty issues with respect to the application of *Firearms Act* regulations as they relate specifically to the interpretation of traditional hunting rights (e.g. the right to hunt and harvest without any form of license or permit and without imposition of any form of tax or fee).

One of the components of the *Firearms Act* is the requirement for users of non-restricted and restricted firearms to complete a firearms safety course as part of the firearms licensing process. Within the CFP, the Firearms Safety Education and Awareness (FSEA) program is responsible for the ongoing “development, implementation, evaluation and revision of national firearms safety standards and various national safety education training courses”<sup>24</sup> as part of the Firearms Safety Education function that it delivers. There is also a safety awareness component to deliver public safety and awareness programs other than the courses.

Two safety education training courses were developed to meet changes to the *Criminal Code* sec 106(2)(c)(i), and were further modified in February of 1999 to reflect changes to the *Firearms Act*. The courses have been updated as recently as July of 2008. The legislation stipulates that individuals wishing to acquire non-restricted firearms must take the Canadian Firearms Safety Course (CFSC) and pass the tests OR challenge and pass the CFSC tests without taking the course; for restricted firearms, individuals must take the CFSC and the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course (CRFSC) and pass the tests OR challenge and pass the CFSC and the CRFSC tests without taking either course. Responsibility for the delivery of the courses rests with each province and territory, and is typically coordinated through the Chief Firearms Office or Firearms Office of each jurisdiction.

While the CFP provides a national standard for the two safety courses to follow, each province licenses firearms safety instructors through various mechanisms to meet its requirements for service delivery. The mechanism is not consistent across the country, leading to a variety of service delivery methods. In Ontario, for instance, instruction is coordinated and delivered by the Firearm Safety Education Service of Ontario (FSFEO), the professional association of instructors authorized by the Chief Firearms Officer to deliver the two safety courses<sup>25</sup>. Among its responsibilities, the FSESO

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<sup>23</sup> With respect to findings for firearms-related unintentional deaths, owing to small sample sizes, five of the less populated jurisdictions were not able to provide statistically significant data; hence, only eight of thirteen jurisdictions were able to report.

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cfp-pcaf/safe\\_sur/fsea-fsmafs-eng.htm](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cfp-pcaf/safe_sur/fsea-fsmafs-eng.htm)

<sup>25</sup> See <http://www.fseso.org/> for more detail.

certifies instructors, maintains an auditing program to ensure the quality of the delivery of courses, provides training aids, and establishes maximum prices that can be charged for delivery of the safety courses. In Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Provincial Firearms Office delivers safety courses in partnership with the Nova Scotia Community College.

The differences in delivery of the courses have, consequently, resulted in a couple of issues arising. The most significant issues are an identified need for some sort of quality control or auditing to ensure a consistent, quality delivery of the courses; to ensure that costs for the courses are maintained at a reasonable level so as to ensure that those seeking training – especially in remote locations – do not find the price to be prohibitive; and ensuring the accessibility of the courses given such factors as language, cultural preferences for learning, and physical remoteness. In British Columbia, which does not have a central agency administering the delivery of the safety courses, there have been problems identified with respect to the quality of instructors, and instructors selling course certification for as much as \$400 without instructing the course. Owing to issues related to cultural diversity, especially in rural and remote locations, educational materials that are provided by the Program are often not relevant to certain populations because they have not been translated into a local language, or are inappropriate for the specific learning preferences of certain groups. This held true especially in Nunavut, and the general issue was also raised in interviews with representatives from First Nations and Métis groups. It should be noted that the offices of the CFO in each jurisdiction visited by the evaluation team were aware of these issues, where present, even if they were unable to resolve them at the time of the writing of this report.

### **Recommendation 5:**

- **That a process of quality control or auditing be developed to ensure consistent, quality delivery of the safety training courses across the country.**

Safety course instructors who were interviewed stated that there are a variety of modifications that could be made to the delivery and/or the content of the safety training courses. Offering recommendations to improve the delivery or content of these courses fell outside of the scope of this evaluation; however, an annex has been included with this study to provide this unsolicited – yet extremely valuable – advice generously supplied with the earnest intention of promoting a safety training program of the highest possible quality.

### **Finding 5**

- **License screening has been successful in denying licenses to ineligible persons, however improvements in screening applicants is hindered by limited access to information from other agencies and insufficient information about applicant mental health risk factors.**

As part of the CFP's mandate to promote public safety, a significant effort is made during the screening process to ensure that only those who are eligible to obtain a firearms license are granted a license. When applying for a license, to then be able to purchase or handle firearms, applicants are screened using a two-tier process. This process entails submitting an application requesting that the applicant provide detailed personal information; when this application is assessed by the CFP, special attention is given to those applying for a Prohibited and Restricted Firearm License. All applicants, however, are screened on an on-going basis through the provisions of 'continuous eligibility', a monitoring function that has a licensee 'flagged' for a review of their license should a

matter of public safety arise after they have obtained their license. Combined, the initial screening of applicants and the process of ‘continuous eligibility’ prevent people every year from obtaining a firearms license for reasons of concern for public safety, and likewise revokes the firearms licenses of sometimes thousands of other individuals over concern for public safety<sup>26</sup>. The following chart summarizes these figures for the past five years, with figures for 2009 being tabulated as year-to-date.

**Number of license refusals and revocations (by year)<sup>27</sup>**

Year	Refusals	Revocations
2005	364	2233
2006	424	2093
2007	466	1701
2008	478	1800
2009	148	499

In order to foster greater successes in promoting public safety through denying or revoking the licenses to ineligible persons, the CFP established an ‘Enhanced Screening’ (ES) unit. This unit conducts a more rigorous screening of applicants, with a focus on those who are deemed to be of high risk in granting a license. The work of the unit consists of calling the firearms licence applicants as well as the two named references with a series of prescribed questions, in order to determine the suitability of the applicant to possess a firearm licence or firearm. There have been differing impressions on the success of the enhanced screening program, considering there have been limited numbers of license refusals directly attributable to the program. Since its inception, the unit has been successful in identifying several instances where applicants falsified the names and signatures of references, as well as instances where references indicate they signed forms under duress by the applicant. Others have confided that even if they signed the form, some circumstances have changed which caused them to change their minds or they believed the applicant should never possess a firearm. These issues on their own do not necessarily disqualify an applicant, however the system in place requests the interviewer’s flag these instances and they are to be forwarded to the applicable CFO<sup>28</sup>. Because a refusal may have involved an enhanced screening flag, there are no processes in place to state that a refusal was solely based on the enhanced screening intervention.

<sup>26</sup> Data from 1998-2009 shows that twice the proportion of prohibited weapon owners had licenses revoked compared to owners of non-restricted weapons. However, in terms of sheer numbers of revocations, the former totals 486 and the latter totals 8969.

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cfp-pcaf/facts-faits/archives/quick\\_facts/2009/2009-03-eng.htm](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cfp-pcaf/facts-faits/archives/quick_facts/2009/2009-03-eng.htm), 2009-06-25

<sup>28</sup> This however is contingent upon the CFO’s first receiving nationally standardized training and policy with regards to their roles and responsibilities under the Firearms Act, as stated in a previous recommendation.



An official from the Central Processing Site related (receiving) “countless comments from applicants and references alike have been received by the CPS, thanking them for doing the enhanced screening. Many have commented on how surprised they were that this was actually done. They frequently comment that this provides some much needed credibility in the process”.

### **Recommendation 6:**

- **That the enhanced screening process continues as it is a useful tool for Firearm Investigators in developing their investigations to determine whether the restricted and prohibited firearm license applicants should be allowed to possess firearms. This process could be further utilized for the non-restricted license applicants on a random basis to ensure that these standards are maintained to a high standard.**

In the screening process to obtain a firearms license, a couple of simple ‘Yes or No’ questions are asked to inquire after the mental and emotional health of the applicant. The purpose of these questions is to deny a license to applicants who may be at a high risk of misusing a firearm to the detriment of public safety, as well as the personal safety of the applicant. These screening questions are deemed necessary as across Canada, almost three-quarters of firearm deaths are attributable to suicide. However, this raises the issue of continuous eligibility and license screening, as an individual’s mental health can deteriorate from the time that they were initially granted a firearms license, thereby becoming a potential risk, over time, to personal and / or public safety.

This is another reason for considering continuation of the license renewal process. There are differing opinions on the need for a license renewal process, be it every five (5) years or a lifetime<sup>29</sup>. Some would argue that with the ‘continuous eligibility’ process in place, concerns of criminal activity are adequately covered. However it has been noted by CFP personnel that by not renewing licences you lose an opportunity to review (potentially) significant changes in a persons life, which could put them at greater risk to themselves or others (i.e. job loss, depression, mental health, changes in marital status and domestic issues etc.)

### **Recommendation 7:**

- **That the CFP work in collaboration with public safety partners to consider the merits of a five (5) year Firearm License renewal process**

Notably, the province of Québec has experienced significant success in having ‘health service providers’ report clients with mental health concerns. Their progress should be reviewed to determine the need to further the program in other provinces.

On Sept 1, 2008 Québec’s gun control legislation, Bill 9, came into force. The legislation is dubbed Anastasia’s Law in memory of 18 year old Anastasia DeSousa, who was killed during the Sept 2006 Dawson College shooting. The law bans the possession of firearms in schools and daycare centres, and on public and school transportation. Under the new rules, teachers, gun club owners, and

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<sup>29</sup> Kelly Sears. “Review of Firearms Licensing Renewal”, 2009. Report submitted to the CFP. The vast majority of interviewees from the CFP supported the five year renewal process, a few supported a ten year renewal, and none supported the lifetime license option. As well, it was shown through a comparative analysis that the five year license renewal is similar to the UK and Australia; New Zealand formerly permitted lifetime licensing but that has since changed to 10 year license renewal.

public transit and health-care workers are also required to report suspicious behaviour relating to firearms, even if it contradicts doctor-patient or any other confidentiality.<sup>30</sup>

Health services are provincially regulated and would need to be approached one province at a time. This has been problematic in light of the privacy issues surrounding mental health, which also needs to be further addressed. An example of the types of existing unresolved mental health issues is represented by the Ontario Medical Association(OMA).<sup>31</sup>

Prior to 2003, the OMA Forms Committee initiated discussions with the Chief Firearms Office to review and revise the process of information collection from physicians whose patients were identified as potentially "high risk" for possession of a firearm. While the content of the form was successfully revised, the process for obtaining the firearms licence remains an issue. The process for obtaining a Firearms licence involves:

- Completion of an application form by the applicant, which is then reviewed by officials in Miramichi, New Brunswick
- Most of the patients referred to physicians for an opinion will be high-risk patients whose problems are clearly identified either through the applicant screening process or reference interviews.
- The physician's report is very often used as a stop mechanism, thus preventing high-risk individuals from obtaining a firearms licence. Not only does government place physicians in a difficult position by requesting confidential and potentially damaging information on their patients, but government also refuses to pay for the form, leaving physicians to collect fees for their services from patients - and possibly placing physician safety in jeopardy.
- The OMA is seeking timely resolution to this matter, and is prepared to resume negotiations. Physicians are requested not to complete the "Firearms Office Authorization for Release of Medical Information Form" until further notice.

Considering almost three-quarters (3/4) of the firearm deaths across Canada are attributable to suicide, there is little progress being made in developing better links with the mental health community as far as reporting obligations. The exception being with the province of Québec, as mentioned above, where more workable arrangements have been made with the mental health services to report on persons of risk. British Columbia has also made some progress, albeit it is regionally-specific only. Although health care is under provincial jurisdiction, the RCMP is the provincial police service in all but two provinces, so this could be approached in a comprehensive nationally-coordinated manner. As further support, a national mechanism has recently been created- the National Mental Health Commission- through which the issue of mental health and firearms can be further pursued. Nevertheless, the concern about privacy rights of the individual has hindered any progress made toward accommodating both the issues of privacy and public safety. Some CFOs have limited cooperation with 'mental health facilities', however this is sporadic and uncoordinated.

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<sup>30</sup> The Canadian Press, Monday, September 1, 2008, new Quebec gun legislation, Anastasia's Law, now in effect

<sup>31</sup> 2003 Ontario Medical Association, summary of health legislation, concerning Firearms Office Authorization for Release of Medical Information Form <http://www.oma.org/phealth/hpolrep/03hpr.htm>

There seems to be a lack of outreach on behalf of health and police throughout most of Canada. The CFP as a whole are not actively pursuing mental health-specific initiatives.

### **Recommendation 8:**

- **That the CFP examine the feasibility of incorporating other agency databanks and applicant mental health risk factors into the decision making process. Accordingly, the privacy issues surrounding mental health needs to be addressed further. As an innovative practice, the province of Québec has ‘health providers’ reporting clients with mental health concerns. Their progress should be reviewed to determine applicability and public safety impacts in other provinces.**

One problem identified in this area is with respect to an inconsistent use of Uniform Crime Reporting codes (UCR2) when police respond to calls that involve an individual with mental health issues. Often police respond to these incidents, which are more commonly coded as “Assistance to the General Public”, a UCR2 code that will not trigger the necessary Firearms Interest Police or FIP flag, needed to raise the attention of the provincial CFO. In the case of a properly coded “Mental Health” instances, if the subject is a firearms license holder, their license will be temporarily suspended so the Firearm Officer can do the appropriate follow-up with the licensee. If there are risk concerns, the licensee can be requested to provide documentation from the licensee’s physician to confirm the subject is not of risk to himself or others, with due respect to privacy rights. One possible solution is to amend the RCMP policy with respect to reporting mental health incidents to the CFO, to encourage officers to make FIP entries using the proper UCR code.<sup>32</sup>

### **Recommendation 9:**

- **That police officers be made aware of the importance, within their provincial jurisdiction, of reporting subjects with mental health concerns. Reporting correct FIP codes, as they relate to mental health, is important to ensure action is taken by the CFO. Reporting procedures as well can vary by police service, so it is important the CFP provides direction on this issue to ensure national consistency.**

### **Recommendation 10:**

- **That the RCMP operational policies about reporting mental health incidents to the CFO be updated and further reference Firearms Interest Police (FIP) reporting.**

CFP personnel are currently performing online web searches for firearms abuse, particularly with firearm licensees and applicants, and they have had success in identifying applicants of concern. Much of their investigative reporting is done using the Firearms Program CFIS. As a national program application for recording following up investigations, it has an opportunity to be utilized by the CFP in promoting public safety. Tracking and retention of historical information needs to be

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<sup>32</sup> RCMP Operations Manual 19.7. Mentally Ill Persons/Prisoners “1. If a person, including a prisoner in RCMP custody, exhibits symptoms of a mental disorder and is endangering him/herself or others, consider immediately escorting them to a medically trained professional... 2. A mentally disturbed person will be incarcerated separately from other prisoners.” There is no further reference to pursuing firearms related checks or making a FIP entry. There is also no apparent referencing to FIP in the Operations Manual.

available to Firearm Officer Investigators in a timely manner, to enable them to properly conduct investigations. Privacy and information security concerns could be addressed by limiting access to sensitive information, such as that related to mental health which could be shared on a, 'as required' basis.

If CFIS were recognized in the *Firearms Act* as a national electronic system, the RCMP would be in a better position to implement quality standards for usage, storage, retention and continuous evaluation/audit. This would allow the RCMP to promote expectations of operational usage consistently, and to mitigate risks including: information availability to police agencies, cross border sharing of investigative material; and balancing information management with the privacy and safety of Canadians.

### **Recommendation 11:**

- **That the CFP make better use of CFIS for investigative work and file management. Tracking and retention of historical CFIS information needs to be maintained electronically and better available to CFO's and Firearm Officer Investigators.**

Police and CFO's require better sensitization to domestic/family violence in circumstances where those committing the act are also firearms owners. Recent Canadian research in one province has shown some possible national implications.<sup>33</sup> The study found that hunting rifles and shotguns are part of the cycle of abuse for many victims of family violence living in rural areas. The researchers learned that there is a very high tolerance level for firearm misuse in rural communities, compared to that in urban communities. Interviews with abused rural women, crisis workers, and police suggest that for some abused women, threats with hunting rifles was a part of the everyday life and that these firearms played a role in creating a climate of control and intimidation. This ranged from dealing with their partner's frequent threats of suicide, damage to property, or threats to harm her, the children or the pets/farm animals if she should ever leave. Such intimidation increased women's fears that something deadly could happen. The acceptance of firearms as a normal occurrence in domestic violence incidents often reduced the perceptions of firearms abuse and risks of lethality even among professionals. Several service providers who worked with victims noted that when a client (abused woman) said that there were firearms in the home (hunting rifle or shotgun), it did not cause alarm. Some police in the study (in particular regions) removed firearms in domestic cases, while several officers mentioned that they did not routinely search for and seize firearms in a domestic case. Authority exists in the *Criminal Code* for police to seize firearms from all alleged perpetrators of domestic violence. A recent Supreme Court of Canada decision may further put onus to police to consider firearms present, even if they are unused, as possible and probable threats to the victim's safety, and hence fit for removal<sup>34</sup>.

Police protocols could be further developed to set out what happens in instances when firearms are involved in a domestic incidence, and to set out when it would be prudent to seize firearms if there is no record of firearms, no firearms visible, or no mention of firearms in the complaint or during the police presence at the residence. Moreover, the role of spouses/partners during the firearms

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<sup>33</sup> Deborah Doherty, Ph.D. and Jennie Hornosty, Ph.D. "Exploring the Links: Firearms, Family Violence and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities." 2008.

<sup>34</sup> R. v. Steele, [2007] 3 S.C.R. 3, 2007 SCC 36 <http://www.canlii.org/en/ca/scc/doc/2007/2007scc36/2007scc36.html>

application process was not well understood, and could be improved<sup>35</sup>. RCMP policy requires updating to reflect recent changes in knowledge about the issue of domestic violence and legislative changes<sup>36</sup>. Under the *Firearms Act*, the CFO has the authority to review the license and if the situation permits further follow-up, can choose to interview the licensee and/or revoke the license.

### **Recommendation 12:**

- **That the CFP further analyzes domestic violence issues involving firearms. That, simultaneously, the RCMP as an organization develops further police protocols for domestic violence calls during instances involving firearms, and that they consider encouraging other police services, which have not yet done so, to adopt this approach.**

### **Finding 6:**

- **Firearms registration is a critical component of the entire firearms program. The program, as a whole, is an important tool for law enforcement. It also serves to increase the accountability of firearms owners for their firearms, by linking registered firearms to licensees. An acceptable level of compliance toward long gun registration is essential for improving the Registry's utility as a tool to promote public safety.**

The registration of a firearm links the firearm to the licensed owner in the Canadian Firearms Information System (CFIS) database, because both data on individual firearms licensees and data on registered firearms are contained in this database. This feature underpins the utility of the CFIS database to law enforcement, as it enables front-line police officers to identify firearms owners in real time, cross-referenced to their addresses through the Canadian Firearms Registry On-line (CFRO). Further, recording firearm information helps police and other public-safety officials carry out investigations effectively, by quickly tracing a firearm to its last lawful owner.<sup>37</sup>

The majority of firearms in Canada are long guns. The majority of firearm deaths in Canada are caused by long guns (see Finding #2; Chart #1) Without registration there is a failure of accountability on behalf of the owner, and it is registration that drives accountability. Without registration, anyone can buy and sell firearms privately and there would be no record. At a minimum, such a transaction would remain the private sphere. This may be contrary to the public

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<sup>35</sup> Doherty et al. 2008, Doherty et al. demonstrated that instead of relying on abused women to report concerns during the application process, it was suggested that when the Firearms Office had cause to investigate an applicant or licensee, that they use this opportunity to ask the partner a series of questions about direct and indirect firearm's victimization, destruction of property, concerns about suicide and threats to harm pets (which was another finding of the study). This type of important information could also be obtained during an investigation that was triggered for other reasons. Also, the study showed that participants in the study reported that they were generally unaware that there was a toll-free number to report firearms abuse to the Canada Firearms Centre

<sup>36</sup> The RCMP has local policing jurisdiction in thousands of rural and remote communities across Canada, with the exception of Ontario and Quebec. The RCMP touches on this in the Operations Manual 2.4. "Violence in Relationships. Section 2.2.7: if there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that it is not in the interests of public safety, including the safety of the individual, determine whether he/she has legal access to firearms or other weapons. If applicable, seize firearms..."

<sup>37</sup> P. 11 The 2007 Commissioner of Firearms Report

interest and the need to have some level of government involvement in this aspect of public safety. Effective risk management and accountability hinges on having both licensing and registration in place. A high level of compliance of the long gun registry is necessary to provide the enhanced value to investigators utilizing the firearms registry. It is important for officer and public safety and is a legislated requirement for all firearm owners.

In providing a searchable database of guns owners and the firearms that are registered in their possession, the registry serves two main public safety functions: first, to promote officer safety by making information available to police officers regarding potential personal safety risks – such as the presence of firearms in a dwelling – when responding to a call for service; and, second, to support police enforcement and investigation activities, such as recovering confiscating firearms from an individual who has been charged with a violence-related offense. In both areas, the contribution that the registry makes to promoting public safety is dependent on the quality and accuracy of the information contained therein.

Due to several issues, the information contained in the registry has limitations as far as giving an accurate picture of firearms registration in Canada. Originally, when the CFP was implemented, quality assurance issues arose with respect to the accuracy of the information that was entered into the system. For instance, some guns were entered multiple times under different serial numbers, meaning that a licensed firearms owner would be recorded in the registry as having more firearms in their possession than they actually held. Over time errors had been detected and corrected, and CFOs readily acknowledged that there is still work to be done in this area. In reviewing recent data, it seems as if the Firearm Registry has evolved to become very accurate at processing firearms registrations. Employees collecting the data have specialized training with the Firearms Reference Table (FRT) a comprehensive CD ROM database with some 139,100 firearm classifications, providing detailed firearm descriptors which differentiate the prohibited, restricted and non-restricted firearms. The computer will not allow an entry to be made unless the nine (9) descriptor fields match with the FRT format. Follow-up calls are made with owners to verify information. The error rate has been halved from 2 per cent to 1 per cent. Second, not all firearms have been registered, and owing to repeated long-gun registration amnesties (2006-2010), information is not consistently entered into the CFP database.. There some confusion surrounding the responsibilities of licensed owners to have their firearms registered, however, currently the law stipulates that they must continue to register their firearms. Lastly, many firearms that are being procured specifically to be used for illegal activities are never entered into the system. However, issues related to the criminal use of firearms, such as those committed using prohibited firearms (ie. handguns), are a law enforcement issue and are addressed through other government initiatives (ie. guns and gangs)

Police-queried firearm searches from the firearms database provide officers with information regarding the subject of a query, their contact information, and a list of all of their registered firearms. This system is seen as an improvement over the previous attempt at registering firearms, notably those classified as long guns. Prior to the long-gun registry, in the 1990s when Firearm Acquisition Certificates (FACs) were the system of accountability, the police encountered difficulties identifying ownership of recovered long guns used in crimes. The person using it often claimed they didn't own it and the FAC system was not effectively maintained as a database that could be relied upon to provide information to assist in conducting investigations. With registration there is also an implicit expectation that people have a duty of care for their firearms and there is accountability back to that person, should they decide to lend it out or fail to store it safely or mishandle it. Registration further helps to reduce the general proliferation of firearms. This is very useful in

investigating licensed owners in the trafficking of firearms to unlicensed users. Without the registry it becomes almost unenforceable.

In a call for service or investigation, general duty police officer safety is increased by knowing if firearms are associated to a person or residence. There are, however, mixed feelings from police officers about the Firearm Registry. Some say 'any tool is better than no tool' and others 'they always presume there is a firearm present, so therefore the Registry is irrelevant'. Before entering a dwelling some officers therefore, might not use the registry. The perception that the registry contains incomplete information was cause for concern among some officers interviewed, who felt they could not depend on the registry to give them an accurate insight as to whether or not there were firearms present in a dwelling.. This is due to the issue that firearms may not have been registered by a firearm user, or for instance, if a firearm was procured specifically to undertake illegal activities.

The registry is a 'law enforcement tool' for seizing firearms during domestic disputes and it allows police to know about other firearms that may not be registered. In major police takedowns and or search warrants, the registry can be utilized to query nearby residences, to see if there are other registered firearms. There may well be associates of concern (living nearby). If police are seizing firearms, it is important for them to be aware of what is around when approaching the premises.

Specialized policing services, such as the Guns & Gangs units, NWEST and the Firearm Tracing unit see the registry as being essential for their investigations and for officer safety. They also see the new Public Agency Regulations as further enhancing their investigative abilities with gun smuggling, as a result of the timelier reporting of guns in police possession. The RCMP's Tracing Unit does approximately 3500 traces per year, determining that a high percentage are smuggled. Better intelligence is afforded by the registry and it tightens up the leads on the criminal networks. It is also an enforcement tool (for police) in the event a Firearm Prohibition Order needs to be followed up so police know what needs to be seized.

The registry also provides data that can be used for confiscating firearms in the event a business or individual loses their firearms license. It can provide a baseline measure of the number of firearms in a given area for the investigation of firearm crimes, and it is useful for following crime trends, showing the demographics of Canada's firearm situation.

In this sense, the registry is a law enforcement tool for seizing firearms from those who should not be in possession of them. For instance, in the event a Firearm Prohibition Order has been placed on an individual, police enforcing the Order require accurate information on the number and types of firearms that they need to seize to enforce the Order properly.

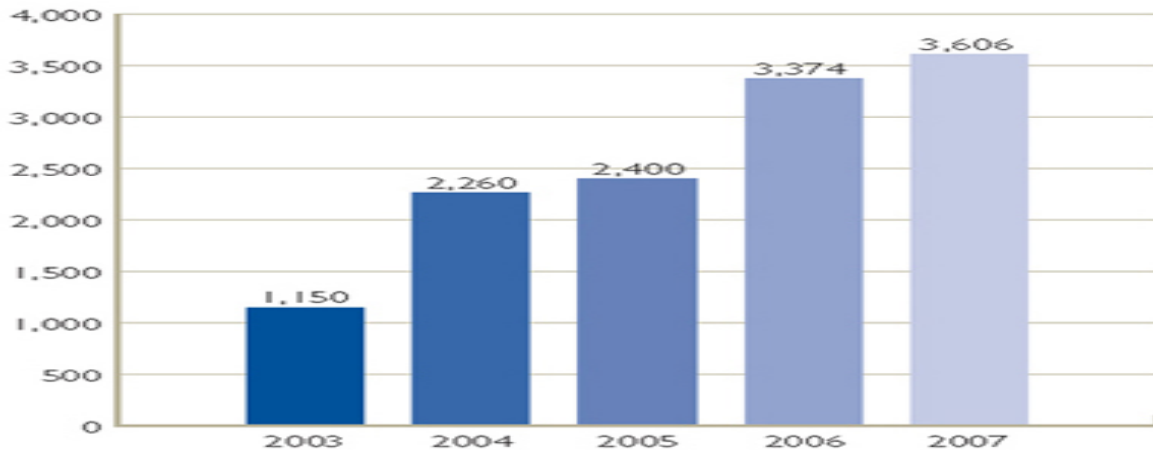
Some specific examples demonstrate how the registry assists in promoting public safety. Firearm registration provided the number of firearms that police were sent to collect when a family in Québec called in to request the removal of weapons from a confirmed suicidal relative. While in the residence, police also found unregistered weapons, which they were able to remove because they did not comply with legislation. In another example, NWEST was asked to provide support to a RCMP Detachment by assisting with a warrant to recover firearms from a subject who had reportedly pointed a rifle at a co-worker and threatened to kill him. NWEST conducted CFRO checks which confirmed that the suspect had a valid PAL with 9 long guns registered. A warrant was granted and executed resulting in the recovery of all 9 long guns, including the suspect firearm, and a quantity of ammunition. Owing to the registration of the firearms, it was possible to successfully enforce the

warrant because investigating officers had accurate knowledge of the number and type of firearms they were required to seize. The subject was Prohibited in Court. The evaluation team has heard many other examples of direct operational benefit derived from the firearms registration system.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, in a press release on March 2009, reiterated the importance of the registry to its membership in maintaining public safety: “All guns are potentially dangerous, all gun owners need to be licensed, all guns need to be registered, and gun owners need to be accountable for their firearms. The CACP supports any efforts to improve the efficiency of the gun control registry system that can be achieved without jeopardizing public safety”.<sup>38</sup>

The registry has shown to be a useful tool for prosecutors during the court release of a charged person, or bail process which allows prosecutors to pursue appropriate release conditions, in relation to other firearms and prohibition orders. The registry assists the policing community and also Crown prosecutors through the preparation affidavits that certify licensing or registration information related to individuals or firearms. This certification is based on data maintained and controlled by both the Chief Firearms Officers and the Registrar. The number of affidavits produced for legal proceedings has continued to increase exponentially over the past five years. (Chart, below) As well, the number of law-enforcement searches on the Canadian Firearms Registry On-line (CFRO) continues to increase as a subset of the Canadian Firearms Information System. Approximately, 424,874 queries were done in 2003 and this increased five-fold to 2,543,974 queries in 2007.<sup>39</sup>

**Number of Affidavits produced, 2003-2007**



Source: Commissioner of Firearms: 2007 Report

Police from non-specialized units/detachments have yet to be shown the cumulative results and benefits of the CFP. As well, CFIS has potential for enhanced service delivery for general duty and specialized police, but has yet to be fully implemented.

<sup>38</sup> March 2009. Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

<sup>39</sup> Commissioner of Firearms: 2007 Report



Public Safety Canada issued a news release June 19, 2006 advising of legislative changes to the *Firearms Act* and Criminal Code introduced in Parliament. This included, “..the requirement for businesses to maintain records of all transactions involving the sale, purchase or disposal of non-restricted firearms. This is another measure that will assist police investigators in locating owners of stolen firearms or those used in the commission of a crime.”<sup>40</sup> There are several public and personal safety implications that may occur if non restricted firearms (long guns) were no longer registered in the central CFIS database.

Interviews have supported the idea that if non-restricted firearms were removed from the registry, they would be untraceable (other than a legitimate sale from a business and tracing their records). The United States currently operates under this system, which is very expensive and operationally impractical for police. When a firearm business closes in the US, the government has supposedly accumulated warehouses full of records to go through for tracing. It is likely that the costs borne to business owners and Canadians will exceed the current costs.

According to the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, since the implementation of Canada’s gun registry in 1995, there has been a significant reduction in firearm-related suicides and intimate partner homicides. They suggested that the proposed changes to gun laws in Canada will have a significant impact on firearm-related mortality and injury. In terms of officer safety, long guns were used to kill ten out of thirteen police officers in the last ten years<sup>41</sup>. They also advocate that there needs to be an expansion of programs focused on prevention of suicide, intimate partner violence and gun-related violence.<sup>42</sup>

Several businesses supported the long gun registry, citing it for good record keeping and the benefit of allowing businesses to sell to an “approved” clientele. There are now fewer concerns with selling to questionable clientele. A registry also supports proper business inspections, by comparing business records with registry information to confirm inventory. There is a need for more robust business inspections as noted by the CFO staff and police in BC, who indicated that there is significant cross-border smuggling (pipeline) of firearms and illegal diversion of firearms by licensed firearm businesses supplying illegal firearms to ineligible persons.

Black market sales are exposing gaps in the current firearm export system. There were significant numbers of firearms which made their way into the black market in B.C. several years ago, which later were found at crime scenes. At the time of the evaluation, it was found that CBSA does not have export controls in place and they do not record individual serial numbers or numbers of firearms coming into Canada by business importation. There is no verification of the business import records received by CBSA to compare with the firearms later registered by the businesses.

The Auditor General’s 2006 report indicated CFP should be working more closely with law enforcement officials, which has been remedied to a certain extent by the program’s incorporation into the RCMP. To better manage the high volume of revocations, law enforcement should be assessing these revocations to prioritize their follow-up. Police are very busy, however with a risking

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<sup>40</sup> June 19, 2006 Public Safety Canada News Release

<sup>41</sup> The long gun has the capability of causing more damage to the human body than the handgun. The police vest can easily be penetrated by ammunition delivered through a long gun, compared to that of a handgun.

<sup>42</sup> January 2009 the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians CAEP Position Statement on Gun Control

methodology, attention is placed on the areas of increased risk, that being restricted and prohibited firearms. The prohibited firearms would be turned in for destruction. There are, on average, less than 200 prohibited and restricted firearm license revocations per month across Canada.

There are various impediments to the registration of firearms involving the Aboriginal population. The issues of firearms and the CFP are explored more fully in the Aboriginal communities finding and recommendations section below.

### **Recommendation 13:**

- **That the existing full registry be maintained as part of the Canadian Firearms Program in order to increase the non-restricted firearms compliance rates in accordance with current legislation.**

### **Recommendation 14:**

- **That, as an interim measure, the CFP considers recommending the CBSA send basic electronic data to the Registry upon shipment entry into Canada of firearms. This would serve to forewarn the registry and the CFO to better monitor registration.**

### **Finding 7:**

- **The Canadian Firearms Program has engaged in a number of partnerships and regularly attempts to foster improvements in this area. Further program success could be achieved by operating the program, through the national role of the RCMP, with some consistency and standardization in all provinces and territories<sup>43</sup>, which would include strengthened partnerships with the law enforcement and community stakeholder groups.**

The CFP, at the provincial and national levels, has established numerous partnerships with a broad assortment of stakeholders, clients, service-delivery groups, and other government partners. Certain partnership arrangements that had specific benefits included embedding RCMP offices within the CFO office in New Brunswick, and the close working relationship that the Ontario CFO has with the Provincial Weapons Enforcement Team. These partnerships have accrued benefits specifically related to enforcement and investigation-related matters. For the delivery of safety training, a partnership in Alberta between the CFO and the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors Alliance was cited as being very beneficial for keeping costs down and the quality of safety course delivery maintained at a high standard. In the case of Nunavut, an informal partnership with the local high school has Elders and a safety course instructor provide firearm safety instruction as a component of a “live off the land” course that is part of the school’s curriculum.

However, not every provincial/territorial jurisdiction has been able to cultivate the same suite of partnerships as the others, and successes have been uneven across the country owing to the unique environment in which each Firearms Program office operated historically (opt-in versus opt-out). This is explored further in Finding #14, Opt-In Firearms Funding Program.

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<sup>43</sup> This applies most especially to the provinces and territories where the RCMP is the provincial/territorial police force of jurisdiction, and operates in this capacity as a result of contractual agreements with the provinces which chose the service of the RCMP. These service agreements are due to expire in 2012 and are currently under negotiation.

As acknowledged by CFOs and groups interviewed, more can be done in the area of building partnerships. The most prominent common theme that emerged was the contribution that partnerships could make toward strengthening awareness and understanding of the Program, Firearms legislation, and regulation. Most interviewees who felt a need to improve partnerships with the CFP sought better communications with the program. For instance, businesses and gun club owners wanted to be kept abreast of policy and regulatory changes so that they could, in turn, keep their clients informed. There is a tremendous appetite among gun owners and businesses to have the information that they need to be well-informed made readily available; however, it was felt that not enough was being done to form the partnerships needed to ensure the timely flow of accurate program information. A common perception amongst advisory, businesses & gun clubs/ranges was the importance of fostering such partnerships; they believe the roll-out of the CFP drove a wedge between them and the government, resulting in increased suspicion of the government's intentions with the ultimate objective of the program – namely, a move toward confiscation of all firearms. Fostering partnerships within the community was thought by some of the interviewees as a way for the Program to gain some trust from its major client-stakeholder group.

The program uses its reach within the RCMP to leverage justice-related partnerships. To this end, the CFP has recently been changed to align with the Firearms Support Services Directorate (FSSD). This brings enforcement as well as regulatory matters under one umbrella, with the aim toward placing emphasis on law enforcement interests, such as officer safety and facilitating investigations, in the delivery of the program. As well, the RCMP has already seen successes in the strengthening of partnerships with the policing community, as representatives of the CFP have had interactions with Provincial Ministers of Justice, Chiefs of Police, and senior RCMP representatives. This works to build at the higher executive and national levels which provides some level of benefit, yet it was unclear if these are sustained partnerships or one-time engagements. (CACF- it is buried under NPS, and just has police members, not CFO reps.) These partnerships have not been seen to extend to national Aboriginal organizations, or significant public safety and health organizations. However the CFP exists as a nationally coordinated, but provincially-based administrative and operational program. Sustainable governance, including partnerships and communication, at the provincial and local level would better suit the program in terms of public safety outcomes.

Detachments work directly with Aboriginal governments and people, engage in community consultation, and develop initiatives and performance reporting for policing which reflects important public safety issues brought to their attention by the community. Aboriginal employment diversity within the RCMP, especially among the Regular Member category, is higher than average for the federal government. For Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees, the RCMP has developed eight Aboriginal job competencies to attain for those who work directly or indirectly with Aboriginal people or on Aboriginal issues. Aboriginal Policing Services has employees liaising directly with Aboriginal communities, and provincial and national organizations representing them. As part of the RCMP's service delivery to Aboriginal communities, the CFP stands to benefit greatly in the administration of its program.

### **Recommendation 15:**

- **That the CFP work with national Aboriginal organizations to pursue discussion and partnerships with Aboriginal communities throughout Canada, representing recognized and unrecognized groups, to enhance license and registration compliance.**

### **Recommendation 16:**

- **That the CFP consider educating police leadership on firearms-related public safety issues through the development of Firearms Committees at the national and provincial Chiefs of Police organizations.**

### **Recommendation 17:**

- **That the CFP further develop working level and senior executive level partnerships with government and non-government health and public safety organizations.**

### **Finding 8:**

- **There are legal and cultural issues surrounding Aboriginal communities which result in confusion regarding the applicability of the CFP. This confusion adversely impacts license and registration compliance, and the effectiveness of the CFP in these communities.**

There is limited involvement and engagement of the CFP with Aboriginal communities. This population group is significantly affected by the laws and regulations surrounding firearms, as hunting for sustenance and as cultural activity is integral to the social fabric of many Aboriginal communities. Yet the CFP in general has not accommodated the needs expressed by Aboriginal groups, or focused its outreach efforts in a culturally-specific manner.

The RCMP is in a unique position with respect to Aboriginal communities in Canada. It is both the federal police for Aboriginal people, and provides local police service to the vast majority (630) of Aboriginal communities in Canada. Further, the RCMP has a special relationship with numerous communities, and in the oral history tradition of many Aboriginal cultures, the RCMP is considered the Queen's representative in upholding Aboriginal treaties, and the rights afforded to Aboriginal people, as a result. As well, the organization has made its work in "Aboriginal Communities" one of its five strategic priorities.

Aboriginal interviewees expressed a common perception that their communities were not sufficiently consulted during the implementation of the CFP. They indicated a need for clear messaging from the Government of Canada with regard to the status of the CFP and its applicability to Aboriginal persons in terms of treaty rights relating to hunting and trapping. The use of long guns for sustenance was identified by interviewees as key to understanding the importance of firearms in Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal interviewees advised that only a small number of Aboriginal community members participate with the CFP and the program is often perceived as making criminals out of otherwise law-abiding persons. They also indicated a need for enhanced partnerships, particularly with Aboriginal governments and people, in the design and delivery of

program components, such as the safety training aspects of licensing. Interviewees perceived that this involvement is critical to increasing support and compliance.

Common feedback from interviewees indicated the need to adapt the program to align with the unique social and cultural environments of Aboriginal communities, including: offering service in languages used by Aboriginal communities; ensuring that safety training is culturally relevant to a population that has a high-number of experienced hunters; reducing complexity of the processes as many are frustrated/intimidated with the formality and complexity; improving accessibility to services, notably with regards to remote/isolated locations; and concern over having to pay for CFP services when they felt that licensing, registration and safety training should be free. Similar feedback was found in the original program evaluation completed by Justice Canada in 2002<sup>44</sup>.

To this end, the program has made efforts at improving service to Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people can apply for a license using Aboriginal Peoples of Canada Adaptation Regulations (APCAR) which allows for alternate Aboriginal certification. This Regulation attempts to balance Aboriginal culture in relation to firearms with a need for public safety. However, without requisite cultural awareness by CFO employees, it is likely that, as was found in the last program evaluation, APCAR is not being followed to an acceptable level. As well, the CFP has engaged in a number of pilot projects with various Aboriginal Communities in order to improve understanding of the CFP and enhance licensing and registration compliance, and offer training. However, these projects have not been widespread among Aboriginal communities, and have been driven by a limited number of employees.

Despite these efforts, Aboriginal interviewees perceived CFP outreach to be non-existent or minimal. Interviewees suggested a need for increased outreach that clarifies the programs applicability to Aboriginal people and explains value of the program. One example of successful outreach that could be emulated by the CFP was in New Brunswick, where the outreach partnerships used in a recent Health Canada diabetes awareness-raising program was well-received by the community. It should be noted that both DND, mentioned above, and Health Canada train their employees in the relevant Aboriginal cultural competencies to run their programs effectively. Another potential for improving the relationship between the Program and Aboriginals is by engaging the youth in safety training. It was felt that youth trained in firearms safety would in turn facilitate the education of parents, with a few interviewees suggesting that the school system presented potential opportunities for providing the safety training. In our subsequent interviews with the Department of National Defense (DND), which runs the Rangers and Junior Rangers program throughout numerous Aboriginal communities and which has an established partnership with RCMP Aboriginal Policing, they expressed an interest in working with CFP on training.

Nunavut deserves special mention given the current injunction and related impacts on the CFP. On July 9, 2003 Judge Robert Kilpatrick granted a temporary injunction protecting Inuit from the federal firearms registry until a lawsuit, as filed by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), an organization dedicated to ensuring that promises made under the *Nunavut* Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) are carried out, goes to court. The court case relates to whether or not the Firearms Act and its regulations directly conflict with treaty rights under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. ( i.e. the right to hunt and harvest without any form of license or permit and without imposition of

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<sup>44</sup> Department of Justice Canada: Canadian Firearms Program implementation Evaluation (to September 2002) <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/J2-229-2003E.pdf>

any form of tax or fee). Several interviewees noted that since the start of the injunction in Nunavut, partnerships have been limited. Prior to the injunction, the territorial Department of Environment was providing safety training course, however since the injunction, safety training has dwindled to almost nil. In Iqaluit, a positive informal partnership with a safety course instructor and a local school included a firearms safety component as part of the school's 'living on the land' course. Perception from most stakeholders in Nunavut is that the businesses and the public turn a blind eye to licensing partially attributed to ongoing injunction. This could, in turn, impact of the effectiveness of the day-to-day policing services provided, and overall public safety, but has not been analyzed in this report.

### **Recommendation 18:**

- **That the Canadian Firearms Program focus on engaging new employees with Aboriginal competencies, and offer current employees Aboriginal perceptions training.**

### **Recommendation 19:**

- **That the CFP develop strategic locally-based initiatives with Aboriginal Policing and the CFO's, and work within the Aboriginal Strategic Priority Working Group to develop organizational-wide initiatives.**

### **Recommendation 20:**

- **To further encourage compliance, the CFP should consider enacting initiatives that may lead to improvements to the rates of Aboriginal licenses and registration.**

### **Finding 9**

- **Overall, the CFP is operating in a cost effective and efficient manner<sup>45</sup>. There is existing value for money and some possible future needs for alternative delivery mechanisms<sup>46</sup>.**

An acknowledgement of the historical situation is required before proceeding with the current-day contextual analysis. The Crown Project "Firearms Program", as commenced by Justice Canada, cost

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<sup>45</sup> This section will examine cost-effectiveness of the CFP's current program administration within the RCMP, from 2006 to present. It is recognized that this evaluation spans a relatively short period of time and that stakeholders in the evaluation may not have been readily able to differentiate between the RCMP's CFP and its previous incarnations. Cost effectiveness is assessed within the context of the goal of the CFP, stated in the logic model, which is to increase public safety through effective risk management of firearms and their users, through improved capacity of government and non-government partners to address firearm crime and safety issues, and responsible firearms ownership and use.

<sup>46</sup> The analysis spans value for money and alternative delivery methods in order to determine the program effectiveness in terms of its resources and the pursuit of its mandate. Due to changes in government direction on cost recovery since 2006, including the amnesties, cost recovery will not be analyzed.

the Canadian taxpayer more than 500 times its original estimate<sup>47</sup>. Significant problems occurred in its development, including: IT cost overruns; little or no strategic planning for such an expansive mandate; lack of governance mechanisms and poor advice and decision-making capacity; provinces opting-out of the program; and the lack of clear and complete information provided to Parliament about escalating costs.<sup>48</sup> No doubt, successive generations of public servants could be trained to avoid the previous problems encountered by the program in its implementation phase. What is interesting is that only a small proportion of its past ineffectiveness has to do with its politicized aspect – the issue of gun control – and the resulting delay in regulatory adjustments and amnesties to become a fully operational program. The political context has been previously explored through the media and will not be investigated in this section.

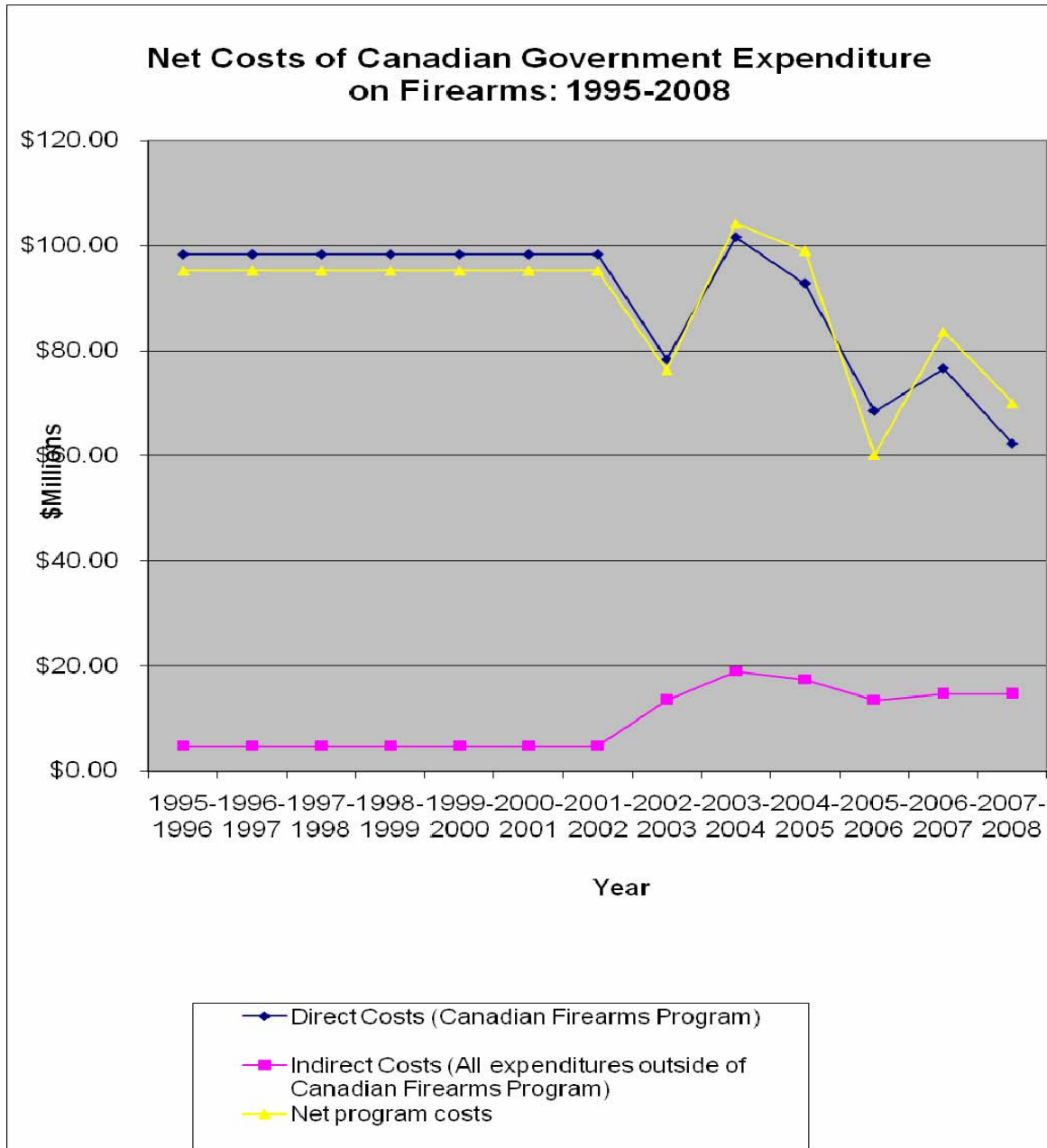
An overview of the government's expenditures on Firearms throughout the entire program existence, found below, highlights some interesting facets. Expenditures on the CFP have decreased since it has come under the RCMP and are expected to continue in this downward direction. This serves to validate the rationale given in 2006 for moving the CFP to the RCMP, with a \$10 million reduction in the overall budget. An exercise that was recently completed to separate out the costs of registration from its supportive link with licensing has demonstrated that portions of the program are actually operating at a much lower cost program than first presumed, even by the RCMP itself. For instance, the gun registration portion of the CFP has been determined, by independent sources, in terms of cost savings to the CFP, at a range of \$1.195-\$3.65 million for the initial year, and subsequent years will range from \$1.57-\$4.03 million depending on the classification certification that will still be required.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Underestimation of costs is neither solely a historical phenomena, nor limited to governments led by certain political affiliations. In 2008, a report was released demonstrating that government multi-billion dollar spending on Canada's Afghanistan mission had also been wholly underestimated. For example, annual cost overruns have ranged from 29 per cent to 310 per cent, based on planned versus actual spending figures. In 2007, the estimated cost of a completed mission was said to be \$8 billion, while the actual costs are being determined at \$18 billion (2011). Much like the CFP's historical situation, "to date, Parliament has been provided with only limited information [on the Afghanistan mission], often after the fact, on these costs, and has not been given estimates on future costs that may be incurred in the support of the veterans of these conflicts". The Fiscal Impact of the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan, Oct, 2008 by parliamentary budget officer Kevin Page.

<sup>48</sup> 1994 Report of the Auditor General of Canada [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_199411\\_08\\_e\\_5913.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_199411_08_e_5913.html) ; Department of Justice Canada: Canadian Firearms Program implementation Evaluation (to September 2002) <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/J2-229-2003E.pdf>; 2006 May Status Report of the Auditor General of Canada- Chapter 4: Canadian Firearms Program <http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/docs/20060504ce.pdf>. There is little doubt that some of these facets led directly to an underestimation of such a complex and expansive public safety program.

<sup>49</sup> "Risks and Benefits of New Legislation - Canadian Firearms Centre Registration Services" PLEIAD Canada, 2009. The study also demonstrates the excessive risks to the program in severing its registration portion.



One cannot assess the financial data of the CFP without discussion about information technology (IT) expenditures. IT costs have been disproportionately high throughout the program’s development, and still exist, albeit to a much lesser extent, today. However, the program is not exceptional compared to other government-run programs with large IT projects. A 2006 report by the Auditor General regarding large IT Projects demonstrates that after more than a full decade of IT projects had passed within the government since its last IT audit, and whereby a TB Framework had been developed for IT, only two of the seven large IT projects assessed met all audit criteria for



well-managed projects.<sup>50</sup> Many of the same symptoms existed for these projects that had existed for Firearms throughout its duration, including significant cost over-runs, long delays and questionable benefits. When CFP was merged into the RCMP in 2006, IT comprised almost 50% of total program expenditures – the industry standard is 20-30%. Costs have now stabilized to 21-27% of direct program expenditures and will be reduced further within the existing RCMP IT architecture, overseen by a Chief Information Officer (CIO), when some of the more significant IT contracts are completed shortly. It is difficult to determine actual effectiveness of the costs spent on IT as the Chief Information Officer sector does not provide CFP with an identification of costs to allow for the determination of the reasonableness of costs by the program area. However, as per the Auditor General's 2006 recommendations, this may be alleviated through development of a framework for CFIS maintenance and program upgrade costs. The program has advised that this framework is intended to be developed this fiscal year 09/10.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> 2006 November Report of the Auditor General of Canada Chapter 3—Large Information Technology Projects [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_200611\\_03\\_e\\_14971.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_200611_03_e_14971.html)

<sup>51</sup> 2006 May Status Report of the Auditor General of Canada- Chapter 4: Canadian Firearms Program <http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/docs/20060504ce.pdf>; “Standish Report”(2004) highlights the potential for progress in technology projects, globally, over the last 15 years. By 2004, the success rate for IT projects had improved somewhat since 1994. The report observed that 29 percent of all projects succeeded (delivered on time, on budget, with required features and functions); 53 percent are challenged (late, over budget and/or with less than the required features and functions); and 18 percent have failed (cancelled prior to completion or delivered and never used).

**Net Costs of Canadian Government Expenditure on Firearms: 1995-2009**

\$million	Past* 1995- 2002	2002- 2003	2003- 2004	2004- 2005	2005- 2006**	2006- 2007***	2007- 2008****	2008- 2009*****
Direct Costs (Canadian Firearms Program)	\$688. 3	\$78.3	\$101.6	\$92.8	\$68.5	\$76.6	\$63.9	\$76.5 [Registry share***** \$1.195- 4.03]
As % of total program costs	95%	85%	84%	84%	84%	84%	85.6%	84.3% [Registry share: 1.6%- 4.8%]
Indirect Costs (All expenditure s outside of Canadian Firearms Program)	\$33.6	\$13.6	\$19.0	\$17.5	\$13.5	\$14.8	\$14.4	\$14.2
As % of total program costs	5%	15%	16%	16%	16%	16%	18.4%	15.7%
Total Program Costs	\$721. 9	\$91.9	\$120.6	\$110.3	\$82.0	\$91.4	\$78.3	\$90.7
Net revenues )	\$(55.4 )	\$(15.6)	\$(16.4)	\$(11.3)	\$(21.9)	\$(7.8)	\$(8.1)	\$(22.2)
Net program costs	\$666. 5	\$76.3	\$104.2	\$99.0	\$60.1	\$83.6	\$70.2	\$68.5

\*All costs from 1995 to 2004/2005 are contained within the Auditor General's Report 2006.

\*\*Fiscal year 2005-2006 was the last year Canada Firearms Centre produced financial statements as a stand-alone department. For this fiscal year, the costs were retrieved from the DPR.

\*\*\*2006-2007 from RCMP DPR.

\*\*\*\*2007-2008 estimates from RCMP DPR and RPP (except for confirmed direct program cost and revenues which were provided by the CFP Financial Management Analyst).

\*\*\*\*\*The cost of the dismantling the registry portion of the program has been only recently assessed (2009). It is estimated that the first year savings will range from \$1.195-\$3.65 million, and subsequent years will range from \$1.57-\$4.03 million, depending on the classification certification that will still be required. Source: "Risks and Benefits of New Legislation - Canadian Firearms Centre Registration Services" Peter Hall, PLEIAD Canada, 2009.

\*\*\*\*\*The current fiscal year appropriation for the program- the program area is forecasting \$71.1 million (now includes the operating expenses for NWEST, which was added to CFP in mid 2008) The indirect costs were unconfirmed at time of writing.

## Finding 10:

- **Canadians are receiving value for their tax dollars from the CFP. Overall, the Canadian Firearms Program is cost-effective in reducing firearms-related crime and promoting public safety through universal licensing of firearms owners and registration of firearms in Canada.**

There is value for money in the CFP. Most interviewees (71% total) were moderately (24%) to highly positive (47%) with regard to cost effectiveness of the CFP. What varies is the degree to which each key informant category feels the Program has achieved value for money. Those in the province of Alberta were highly positive (100%) while the least positive was Nunavut (50%). Special interest groups, nationally, were mostly positive (66%) yet police and government agencies were 50% positive. It was noted by evaluation personnel that police had commented on the lack of results that had been demonstrated to them by the CFP, coupled with the burden that this program had placed on human resource capacity. CFP staff believed that the Program was cost-effective (due to extensive partnerships and leveraging of funding) but that there was room for improvement. Respondents also commented on the public safety value of the Program, although there was uncertainty as to how one might quantify this value in financial terms. This can be typical for an administrative and preventative program, although communications deficiencies (as per program goals and results) to employees, partners, and the public were noted in a previous section. The majority of external partners felt the Program provided good value for money and performed an essential public good. On the whole, interview respondents offered few comments regarding the relationship between money spent and results achieved.

However, data from the interviews shows that the program is attempting to do “more with less”. The financial situation of the CFP is one in which the program’s mandate has been expanded, (addition of enforcement/operational role) and concurrently the budget has been reduced<sup>52</sup>. This has created a situation whereby it could be argued that the current budget is not sufficient to meet the program’s expected performance objectives. Questions of sufficient funding were raised. There is a strong risk that any relatively small cost savings is more than offset by losses in program coordination and cohesiveness and, thereby, in effectiveness (see Success 1).

Since it is difficult for preventative programs to determine effectiveness, one method is to assess risk. The largest public safety risk to Canadians with respect to firearm fatalities may not stem from guns and gangs, but from firearm-related suicides and long-gun related homicides (the latter in non-Census Metropolitan Areas) and spousal homicides. The majority of gun shot wound-related hospital admissions (not including the larger number of emergency department visits) are for unintentional wounds and suicide attempts. The medical total (including direct care costs and lost productivity) for wounds and fatalities, was estimated at \$6.6 billion in 1991, and adjusted for inflation in 2009 is \$9.1 billion.<sup>53</sup> Yet, outreach required on these issues, to the public, and to

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<sup>52</sup> The CFP’s budget was reduced upon incorporation into the RCMP. As well, as part of the RCMP, the CFP’s budget has since been temporarily reduced in order to fund the 2010 Olympic security; in the 2009-2010 FY, all RCMP programs have received various levels of cuts to offset Olympic security losses.

<sup>53</sup> Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, “CAEP Position Statement on Gun Control.” 2009. by Carolyn E. Snider, MD, MPH; Howard Ovens, MD; Alan Drummond, MDCM; Atul K. Kapur, MD, MSc; Bank of Canada Inflation Calculator, 2009 [http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/rates/inflation\\_calc.html](http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/rates/inflation_calc.html)

prevention organizations supporting public safety, is not well-supported by the CFP. The communication and outreach strategy, which addresses public safety risk issues affecting all parts of Canada, has remained unfunded.

### Firearm Deaths in Canada

Year	<sup>1</sup> Homicides			<sup>2</sup> Suicides			<sup>2</sup> Accidental			Total Homicide suicide and accidental
	Handgun (% of total)	Long-gun	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other, unspecified	Handgun	Long-gun	Other, unspec.	
2004	* 112- 14%	52- 7%	9	88- 11%	475- 61%	29	1	14- 2%	0	780
2003	110- 15%	45- 6%	6	95- 13%	451- 60%	14	4- 1%	12- 2%	10	747
2002	98- 12%	46- 5%	8	92- 11%	553- 66%	25	8- 1%	9- 1%	2	841
2001	110- 12%	53- 6%	8	106- 12%	569- 64%	25	3	17- 2%	0	891

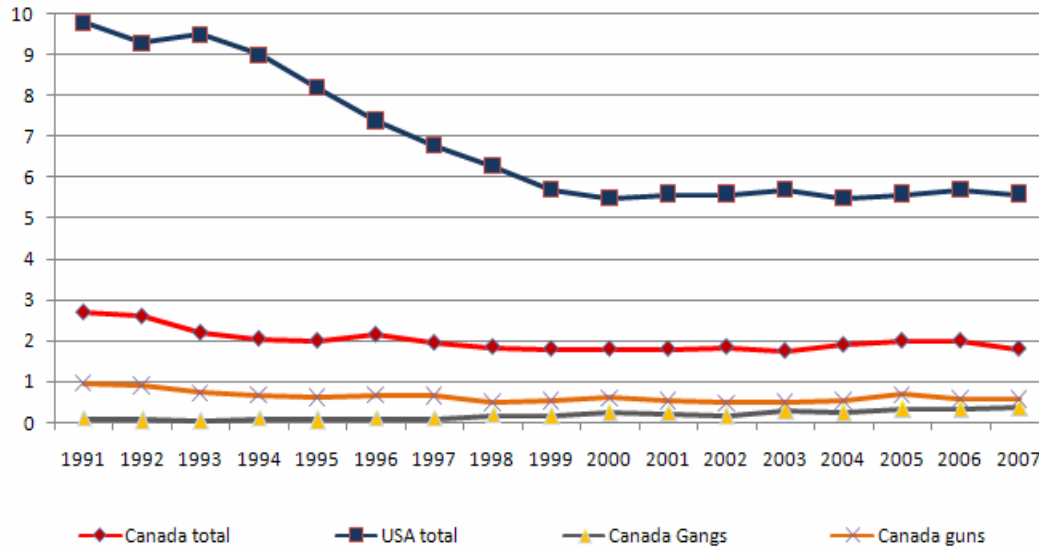
\* First number denotes number of deaths. Second percentage is in relation to total homicide, suicide& accidental deaths, in the far right column.

1. Firearm homicide source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey

2. Firearm suicide and accidental death source: Chief Provincial and Territorial Coroners from across Canada

### Homicide trends (per 100,000 population)

compared to total gang homicides (including guns, knives etc.)



An overall comprehensive understanding of public safety issues is critical in order to attempt to meet a portion of its objective to reduce deaths and injuries resulting from firearms. As such, differentiating criminal identity is important in understanding firearms issues. For the most part, in Canada, lethal violence caused by firearms does not stem from a distinct criminal class (ie. gangs) yet there is a perceived high level of risk to this very concept. Following the advice of Americans in the US, Americans who have relocated to Canada, and those polarized in the debate (gun lobby and gun control lobby) in the provision of American circumstances and data, does not aid, in any positive

manner, Canadian public policy with respect to firearms.<sup>54</sup> In the US, the hand-gun has been at the centre of the debate for decades – the handgun is seven times as likely to be used in homicides compared to long guns.<sup>55</sup> In Canada, it is only twice as likely, and while this may be applicable in very large urban areas, it is not the case in smaller urban centres, towns, and rural and remote parts of Canada. Recent attention to gang violence in Toronto and Vancouver gives prominence to hand gun violence, however, it may not be the more prevalent public safety risk.

It has been difficult to confirm that there is the elevated level of understanding of criminological and social health theory within the CFP, which is essential for developing relevant future-focused initiatives. Criminality including violence is more widespread among the population than is commonly believed. Behavioural scientists have recognized the role of situational factors in human behavior. Many people who commit violent acts (even homicide) have no known history of criminal behavior.<sup>56</sup> This again leads to the capacity issue within the CFP, and the lack of value placed on research, policy and communication /outreach functions to support the program, which has been evident since the last program evaluation, completed in 2002.<sup>57</sup> More emphasis on these functions would enable the program to better respond to the needs of Canadians, both at the local and national levels. It is possible that better and more relevant decisions would be made with a renewed and enhanced capacity.

Interviewees who had reported good value for money generally noted that there is difficulty in determining how to put a value on prevention or the avoidance of incidents. Usually, an analysis would be performed on the cost value of the program by the human lives it has saved. Since it is essentially a preventative program administratively and operationally, it is difficult to determine number of lives saved. One could presume, as was in the Auditor General's 2002 report, that license denials and revocations would be for those who might harm themselves and/or others. The program response to the Auditor General was that, "Public safety is the objective of this initiative, and costs have to be viewed in relation to increased safety achieved with this program. It is worth noting that under the new program, 50 times more license revocations from potentially dangerous individuals have occurred as compared to the last five years of the old program."<sup>58</sup>

License screening has been successful in denying licenses to ineligible persons, and through continuous screening and revocations of licenses and weapons through prohibition orders, this

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<sup>54</sup> "Government Spending in Canada and the US" Dept of Finance Canada, 2003. Re: Public order and safety expenditure for the protection of persons and property. In 2001, the US spent 2.2 of its GDP on public safety, while Canada spent 1.9, and yet Canada is safer. Perhaps the difference can be explained through Canada's increased expenditures on income security, health, social services, recreation and culture. The study does not explore laws and regulatory policies, although these are highly valued in, and synonymous with, Canada.

<sup>55</sup> (Crime in the United States, 2007 [http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2007/data/table\\_20.html](http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2007/data/table_20.html))

<sup>56</sup> Boyd, 1988; Supreme Court of Canada, 2000

<sup>57</sup> Department of Justice Canada: Canadian Firearms Program implementation Evaluation (to September 2002) <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/J2-229-2003E.pdf>;

<sup>58</sup> 2002 December. Report of the Auditor General of Canada Chapter 10:Department of Justice. "Costs of Implementing the Canadian Firearms Program" [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_200212\\_10\\_e\\_12404.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_200212_10_e_12404.html)

number is significant in terms of potential lives saved. To-date more than 22,000 people have been denied the privilege of a license. Privacy legislation prohibits us from acquiring the full explanation and details surrounding the value of lives saved from license refusals and revocations. However, conservative estimates on the value of life range around \$1 million (Cdn.) per life, minimum, and depending on individual circumstances it can rise from \$4.7 - \$10 million (US dollars).<sup>59</sup> If one surmised then that, of the 18-39% persons who were deemed to be a potential harm to themselves or others and who had their license refused or revoked, and using the lower range number of 18%, then approximately 3,940 people may have been saved<sup>60</sup>. This would amount to \$3.9 billion saved and would completely cover the costs of maintaining the program well into the future.

Also included in the overall direct program cost of the CFP are Grants and Contribution Agreements. Those were not directly assessed as there existed ambiguity over the placement of Grants and Contributions in RCMP evaluations.<sup>61</sup> However, it can be noted that there is a lack of engagement by the program area in its outreach about these grants and contribution agreements, specifically the “Aboriginal and Other Communities and Organization Funding Program (AOCO), and the resulting lack of community uptake of the funds. This was especially so, as Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations and associations exist which could support CFP objectives, and those communities that require culturally/language appropriate services could be best offered by those representing their own cultural group. (First Nation, Métis and Inuit). The fund totals \$1 million per year, however, Aboriginal communities have not accessed the full amounts in the past several years. In 2006-2007 only \$200,000 was disbursed to these communities and in 2007-2008, \$100,000.

In that the CFP is but one part of the response to issue of firearms regulation and public safety in Canada, the evaluation team did not find an appropriate comparator in Canada or internationally.<sup>62</sup>

During the process of this evaluation, and as part of the Expenditure Management System, the RCMP participated in the federal’s government’s Strategic Review process in 2008. In September 2008, the RCMP submitted its program reduction proposals, which were approved in the January 2009 budget. Program cuts included the termination of several IT service contracts and other planned efficiencies that would result in an additional \$5.1M in savings realized beginning in 2010/11.

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<sup>59</sup> Appended Statistical Overview; Dale Clayton and Alberto Barceló “The Cost of Suicide Mortality in New Brunswick”, 1996 ; W. Kip Viscusi “The Value of Human Life: Estimates with Risks by Occupation and Industry” Harvard Law School, May 2003.

<sup>60</sup> Commissioner of Firearms: 2007 Report. This estimate is the lowest range estimate, and most are a result of court prohibitions. It does not include the possibility of multiple victims.

<sup>61</sup> This issue has since (April 2009) been resolved by Treasury Board in that Grants and Contributions and all programs covered through cost-recovery (ie. Contract Policing) will become part of the RCMP-mandated Evaluation Plan.

<sup>62</sup> ie. Similar administrative/operational policing programs which work to prevent crime and enforce laws, and which have a significant interactive IT component with public and police.

## **Recommendation 21:**

- **That meaningful research, policy and communications functions with requisite competencies be improved within the CFP. This would serve to enhance strategic decision-making and cost-effectiveness in order to effectively support the public safety objectives of the program (regulatory and operational).**

## **Finding 11:**

- **While the existing delivery methods of the CFP are working well there may be more effective and efficient ways of achieving the CFP objectives.**

There is a general feeling among the range of interviewees that the CFP is employing effective delivery methods. Some alternatives have been or are being explored to increase standardization and to address capacity issues across regions (e.g., one-window notification). Other suggestions provided include: improved data collection and storage; improved communications; and a more coordinated approach. Based on other findings, such as the lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities of the federal government with respect to other levels of government and the private sector on the issue of firearms, it may be difficult to embark on alternative delivery methods.

CFP Staff interviewed were also aware of the issue regarding accessibility of services and are examining possible pilot projects for integrating portions of service delivery with other agencies. For example, in recent years many provincial Motor Vehicle/Driver licensing programs have integrated with other provincial services (one-stop shopping for licenses) and likewise Service Canada delivers a wide range of integrated federal services to local and even remote communities. This variety of provincial/federal options would appease the opt-in (provincial)/opt-out (federal) system as it exists. CFP staff are aware of the special nature of firearms, with regards to the sensitive nature of private information supplied by firearm owners and also with regard to the security issues surrounding access to police information. Despite these unique challenges, we were told that CFP Staff are examining the feasibility of conducting a pilot project for integrating portions of service delivery, such as local kiosks for applicants to securely enter required information.

Service is impeded, and overall compliance is compromised, when license owners do not renew their licenses. A significant proportion of license non-renewals (29%) are related to license holders not advising the CFP regarding address changes. Some of these license holders have outdated addresses on file and cannot be reached easily.<sup>63</sup> Alternatives in service delivery are required for this particular issue as it has a direct effect on front line policing due to the resulting necessary revocations of firearms. We have since learned that the CFP has secured the services of Equifax to help ascertain addresses of those who require renewal. They are also checking with licensee references to find previous license holders. However, this approach may not be successful within Aboriginal

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<sup>63</sup> Commissioner of Firearms: 2007 Report.



communities due to frequent address changes.<sup>64</sup> Service Canada has strategies in place to address these issues for the various mailings it has produced<sup>65</sup>.

There are other alternatives for the CFP to influence responsible and lawful behaviour, outside of the criminal justice system and penalties. This would include social mores, common good, and common sense particular to Canadian culture and context, and which is rooted in healthy discussion, quality information and community outreach. The concept of social responsibility may lead to improved registration and accountability for one's own guns.<sup>66</sup>

Alternative service delivery could also result in other RCMP areas performing some of the administration or operations of the CFP, or providing direct support to the CFP. The CFP, which has been part of the RCMP since 2006, has not been able to leverage programs within other business lines to close any gaps in its program objectives or the RCMP's overall strategic objectives, especially the youth and Aboriginal strategic priorities. Also, some necessary components of the program could be delivered within other training programs, such as the compliance regulations being offered at the annually mandated re-qualification of firearms, and thereby reaching all police officers.

As well, in terms of improving coordination among the provinces in order to meet its public safety objectives (see opt-in section), the CFP has not conceptualized that its recently acquired placement within the RCMP could prove advantageous in engaging the provinces which are currently opt-out to become opt-in as part of the new repertoire of contractual services offered by the RCMP. The RCMP's contract to police in the opt-out provinces is due for renewal in 2012. A comprehensive RCMP approach on firearms issues from a public safety perspective could be lucrative for all parties, including Public Safety Canada.

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<sup>64</sup> Stats Canada, "Aboriginal people more mobile than non-Aboriginal People", 2003 Aboriginal people change addresses more frequently than the rest of the population (22% versus 14%)

<sup>65</sup> In attempting to mail Common Experience Payments to former students at Indian Residential Schools, Service Canada found difficulty in determining name spellings, and in reaching some people who had no other sources of identification, such as bank accounts, credit cards or titles to houses. They developed a successful system to deliver the payments, which may benefit other government organizations having difficulty locating former Aboriginal licensees.

<sup>66</sup> Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein. "Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness", 2008. The authors claim that people need nudges for decisions that are difficult and rare, for which they don't receive prompt feedback, and when they have trouble translating aspects of the situation into terms they can easily understand. An example of the line of thought around social responsibility could be, "Be responsible. Be Canadian. Register". Policy and communications nudges to help people register could include making registration "free of charge" or offering non-monetary incentives (see Dan Ariely, "Predictably Irrational", 2008), demonstrating clearly how registering has a direct effect upon individual and public safety, and showing clear directions on where to go to register or renew (whether locally or on-line).

## **Recommendation 22:**

- **To become a future-focused program, a risk assessment, supported by other services in the RCMP, would enable CFP to determine its alternative service delivery options, level of risks and solutions.**

## **Finding 12:**

- **Overall, businesses are satisfied with CFP service delivery. Effective service is also being delivered to individual program participants. Program management routinely makes efforts to improve service, however issues have been identified regarding accessibility of service and delays during peak periods.**

This section will address satisfaction levels for the various CFP services. The provinces surveyed reported mostly moderate to high levels of satisfaction with service delivery. Nunavut, being the only territory sampled, was mostly moderately to highly satisfied, although a significant portion (40%) reported low levels of satisfaction. When separated by groups, police and government agencies were primarily highly satisfied (72%), while special interest group were both moderately (19%) to highly satisfied (56%). The most common perception amongst stakeholder interviewees is that they reported being satisfied with service “delivery”, but not the Program and its objectives (i.e. its overall intent including having to obtain license and registration, take safety training). Many noted that there have been progressive service delivery improvements over the years.

Businesses noted satisfaction with service delivery provided by on-line transfer system, information provided at CFAC website, and service provided by the Central Processing Site. They felt that further incremental improvements are possible in the areas of: fine tuning the on-line transfer system to allow actual serial numbers to be entered; reducing wait times for transfers; availability of business contacts at Firearms Registry for consultation; and allowing for bulk entry of rifles. Several businesses reported that the ease in completing transfers on-line has significantly improved the system.

For the most part, individual firearm owners noted less satisfaction than business owners with service delivery. Many interviewees indicated satisfaction with the friendliness and helpfulness of CPS personnel. Some individual firearm owners indicated dissatisfaction involving transfers and lengthy (CPS) phone call wait-times. Many individuals reported being frustrated & intimidated with the formality and complexity of the processes involved, and that some processes be performed on-line. In addition, seasonal peak times, such as hunting seasons, increase waiting times for CFP services.

Many interviewees expressed concern regarding accessibility of service. Many program participants, in particular those from more remote/ rural areas, expressed frustration in not having face-to-face contact with CFP personnel, but rather having to rely upon phone service for the answering of any questions. In addition, many interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with delays experienced during peak periods, such as hunting season.

CFP Staff interviewed were cognizant of the issue of delays experienced during peak periods, and continue to pursue opportunities for improvement, and communicate improvements in service

delivery on their website. They were also aware of the issue regarding accessibility of services and are examining possible alternative service delivery options.

As stated in a previous section, mixed feedback was received from police, who are also program participants, on the utility of the program. The more specialized units which are focused directly and everyday on gun issues, (ie. Guns & Gangs units/ NWest/ Tracing) see the program as essential to their operations. Other operational units, which used the service less often and often have the firearm as an indirect aspect of their investigation, were mixed in feelings – some thought ‘any tool is better than no tool’ while others thought ‘always presume there is firearm present’, so they were unsure of the program’s relevance. The Canadian Police Association and Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police have made their views of the program widely known. They fully support the existing licensing and registration program, but would also like to see enhancements made in order to fulfill our international commitments, including markings.<sup>67</sup>

### **Recommendation 23:**

- **That the Canadian Firearms Program continue to examine the feasibility of expanding web-based service to individual program participants, and integrating service delivery with other provincial and/or federal service agencies.**

### **Recommendation 24:**

- **That the CFP promote its services among police who can utilize the CFP-supported systems to contribute to more effective operations and public safety overall.**

### **Finding 13:**

- **Offices of the Chief Firearms Officers have insufficient personnel for effectively carrying out investigations, business inspections and communication/outreach.**

Interviews revealed significant human capacity issues impeding on effective provincial and territorial-level administration and operations. There are numerous problems resulting, including limited community outreach (ie. Nunavut); infrequent business inspections and lack of outreach to businesses; delays in individual license investigations; and backlogs in firearm investigations (ie. BC)

To alleviate some of the problems, interim solutions have been devised. They are, however, unsustainable. For instance, delegated authority has been given to some Firearm Officers to help with seizures where a registrar’s signature is also required. As well, some firearms have been grandfathered, however the issue is extremely complex and the Firearm Officers are asked to call a 1-800 number.

CFO’s have reported numerous human resource issues which impact upon police operations and support. To save on costs, most of the provinces/territories are using civilian CFO employees, however, they are unable to access relevant RCMP data to perform their duties due to security and privacy concerns. Ontario was comprised of a mix of civilian/police employees, adding to their ability to access information. In NB,BC, NV the public seem to assume that the local RCMP detachments can provide more assistance, however a lack of information and existing capacity gap

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<sup>67</sup> [www.cacp.ca](http://www.cacp.ca)

hinders the local RCMP's ability to meet this public expectation – the public is often referred to the Central Processing Site. Resource challenges impede FIP and create backlogs, yet it was mentioned that CFP could be managing the clients to alleviate the burden. There is also a gap identified by the police chiefs for enforcement of license revocations when no new resources have been added.

In all of the provinces/territories sampled (NB, ON, BC, NV and AB), there was overwhelming support to include Conservation officers, who have access to, and are readily available in, areas where police may not be, in the program's process.

#### **Recommendation 25:**

- **That, for the purposes of achieving effective national coordination, appropriate categories of employees and numbers of employees be provided to the CFO offices to enable effective administration and operations (ie. investigations, business inspections, provincial policy and communications/outreach.)**

#### **Recommendation 26:**

- **That provincial partnerships with other government agencies (ie. Conservation; other agencies discussed in Findings #3 and #5) be further explored and integrated into CFO offices, if appropriate.**

#### **Finding 14:**

- **The Opt-in Firearms Funding Program is an appropriate mechanism for delivering the Canadian Firearms Program and achieving its public safety mandate. The program allows participating provinces to administer common service delivery standards in an integrated and localized context.**

Five provincial governments are federally funded for the delivery of the firearms program, including: Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Québec and Ontario. The staff in these provinces are provincial employees. In this evaluation, two opt-in provinces, Ontario and New Brunswick, were examined in-depth to determine whether or not the opt-in mechanism for delivering services has been successful. On the whole, the opt-in model has proven to be an appropriate mechanism for delivering the firearms program, although a distinctive difference has been identified with respect to the inconsistent application across the provinces and territories of national regulations, and the resulting operations and public safety impact.

The main benefit cited for creating the opt-in program was the promotion of a program delivery model that met an identified need for the provinces to be able to adapt the delivery of the program to local circumstances. In this area, it was believed that the opt-in program has been successful; service delivery has been aligned to meet the service delivery priorities of the provincial governments, and be supported to work with other areas of provincial jurisdiction, such as justice and policing, and health. In Québec, this culminates in an integrated service delivery model, and a profound interest to improve the program to meet heightened provincial public safety and health expectations. In Ontario, for instance, this means that the program is delivered in such a way that urban firearms issues can be addressed while ensuring that rural differences are acknowledged. In New Brunswick, it is believed that the opt-in delivery model has enabled the program to be better received by stakeholders and clients because of a local cultural perception that understands the

provincial government to be more trustworthy than the federal government. In Alberta, an opt-out province, a senior manager believed that the province might be better served under the opt-in provincial model because it would promote service delivery that is better aligned to the culture and history of that province. As well, comparatively better resourcing was also cited as a benefit of participating in opt-in program, with representatives from B.C., which had changed from an opt-in delivery model to an opt-out delivery model, stating that resource levels were higher under the opt-in program.

The main disadvantage of the opt-in model that was raised by a few respondents was the inconsistency in the application of policy between provinces. While this was an entirely predictable outcome for a program delivered with flexibility in mind, it is not evident what the full consequences of these inconsistencies have been from the perspective of achieving program outcomes. Several respondents from opt-in and opt-out provinces, representing the full spectrum of interviewees, did note that inconsistent delivery was a weakness of the program. With respect to service delivery, for instance, the inconsistent application between provinces of policy surrounding Authorization to Transport (ATT) permits caused confusion and dissatisfaction among CFP clients who travel between provinces, such as sport shooters and hunters. From a public safety perspective, it was noted by one respondent that it could be very embarrassing for the program if the inconsistent application of policy was demonstrated to lead to a national problem. Although a specific example was not provided, this comment does highlight the need for a CFP-wide risk assessment to be conducted, identifying where areas of the inconsistent application of firearms policy could expose the program – and, by extension, to clients and citizens – to potentially harmful risks.<sup>68</sup>

It appears as if the opt-out provinces/territories, where the RCMP is the provincial/territorial police service, benefit substantially from the current cost arrangement, in terms of dollar value. The other opt-in provinces, where there are other provincial police services, have made substantial investments to benefit from the weight and services of the program, and ironically some of them may benefit even less due to database incompatibilities with RCMP systems. However, the opt-in model seems to show greater capacity and capability, due to its provincial integration (see above), and therefore meets the needs of those provinces. Some opt-in provinces have requested enhanced provincial jurisdiction over some firearm issues, including gun ownership, storage and carriage.

### **Recommendation 27:**

- **That a risk assessment, comparing the opt-in and opt-out delivery mechanisms, with a focus on human and financial resources, and the minimum standardization of approaches, should be undertaken by the CFP.**

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<sup>68</sup> It should also be noted that owing to the differences in the delivery structure of the program, operating practices between firearms offices vary greatly. In the previous Justice Canada evaluation, there is a vast difference between provinces with respect to the background, skills, and core competencies of firearms officers. For instance, Ontario's officers were also Ontario Provincial Police officers – reflecting that province's 'law and order' focus on gun crime – whereas in British Columbia, firearms officers were a mix of civilian and retired police officers. It was not apparent, however, that service delivery was specifically affected by these differences; such an in-depth examination was beyond the scope of this evaluation. In instances, however, where issues arise owing to resourcing shortages of skilled firearms officers, the potential exists for the RCMP to use its national reach with its contract policing partners to bolster provincial firearms offices.

### **Finding 15:**

- **Firearms are entering the country unregistered and therefore pose a public safety risk through potential illegal diversion by businesses.**

There appears to be general support for the legislation regarding the licensing and registration of firearms among those interviewed. However, the lack of resources provided to regulation and the failure to enact certain provisions of the *Firearms Act*, such as the import and export provisions, has hampered effective control.<sup>69</sup>

Currently, the Registrar and CFO know that firearms have been imported after-the-fact or only when the firearms are registered by the business, despite the fact that two other federal agencies, DFAIT and CBSA, are aware of the importation of those firearms. Section 107 of the Customs Act prohibits disclosure of the information.<sup>70</sup> Further, the Canada Customs Coding Form is not shared with the CFP as there is no current legislative requirement. This form describes specific importation transaction details, lists goods that are entering Canada and accounted for as imported (e.g. quantity, description, value, make, model, serial number, etc.). Without access to the information within this form, the CFP is unable to accurately compare firearm inventories.<sup>71</sup> The CFP has stated that information on imported firearms is available to the CFP from CBSA under terms of an existing Memorandum of Understanding, however, the information is not free-flowing and the arrangement with the CFP is normally on a case by case basis.<sup>72</sup> The CFP has since stated that they are presently working on a system to address the issue.

### **Recommendation 28:**

- **That the RCMP, through the CFP, continue to work with and provide expert advice to its public safety partners related to potential amendments to the Firearms Act with respect to the pre-registration of firearms prior to their entry into Canada.**

### **Recommendation 29:**

- **That appropriate resources (Firearms Officers) are dedicated to business inspections.**

### **Recommendation 30:**

- **That an interim solution be recommended to CBSA to support free flowing information to the CFP.**

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<sup>69</sup> BC Firearm Report (Nov 2008), P.29

<sup>70</sup> P.45 Section 107 includes information sharing by CBSA only if there is an existing criminal investigation.

<sup>71</sup> Criminal Intelligence Service Canada (CISC) 2007 National Strategic Firearms Threat Assessment”, P.19

<sup>72</sup> CISC email November, 2008

## **Finding 16**

- **Regulations for businesses require further definition and clarity as presently they pose a potential risk to public safety.**

Businesses may import prohibited or restricted firearms into the country through possession of a special purpose license to supply firearms to the movie and/or theatre industry. The types of firearms used are often replica firearms or guns that can fire blanks with real firearms being used only for close ups. There seems to be an abundance of prop master businesses to support the movie industry. B.C. has 63 such businesses, while Ontario has only 16. Police are concerned about the privileges awarded to these types of businesses and have identified several cases where these privileges have been abused and resulted in the trafficking of firearms.<sup>73</sup>

There are concerns with the definition of a firearm. The lack of clarity permits the sale of individual parts which can later be adapted and made into a working firearm, again. There are concerns with regard to the lack of clear guidelines on what constitutes a proper deactivation of a firearm and the process which requires no official verification of the deactivation by a firearms or police officer. As well, there may exist a lack of compliance by businesses toward reporting consignment, lost or stolen firearms to the registrar, and this represents an additional potential opportunity for gun trafficking.<sup>74</sup>

## **Recommendation 31:**

- **That a review of prop master businesses is completed and appropriate regulatory procedures be followed to ensure compliance with Business Regulations.**

## **Recommendation 32:**

- **That the CFP reviews and modifies deactivation guidelines, and the definition of a firearm, so that parts cannot be milled and remade into working firearms. As well, the CFP should further develop policy and related measures regarding business requirements to report consignment, lost or stolen firearms in order to promote compliance, as supported by the *Firearms Act* and the *Criminal Code*.**

## **Finding 17:**

- **As a member of the international community, and through various agreements, Canada has committed to measures to improve world-wide public safety outcomes resulting from firearms.**

Canada has signed the UN Firearms Protocol which is designed to reduce the world-wide trafficking of firearms and as such, calls for import markings on all firearms to indicate when firearms entered the country. For example, if a firearm entered Canada in October 2009, the firearm would be marked with CA10/09. Since 1969, the U.S. has had a requirement that the firearm must be marked with an identification mark that shows it was imported to the U.S. and the year it was

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<sup>73</sup> BC Firearm Report (Nov 2008), P.34

<sup>74</sup> BC Firearm Report (Nov 2008), P.21

imported.<sup>75</sup> Although it is critical to a well functioning gun registry, the marking regulations have been deferred in Canada until December 2009 to allow time for an implementation study. These regulations will require that firearms be permanently marked with their manufacturing and, if applicable, importation status. The Canadian Police Association, Canadian Association of Police Boards and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police all support the need for marking regulations. The study is being conducted jointly by the CFP and Public Safety Canada<sup>76</sup>.

Canada is also fairly similarly aligned with other commonwealth nations- UK and Australia- and with New Zealand, as to the co-existence of licensing and registration systems<sup>77</sup>.

### **Recommendation 33:**

- **That the RCMP, through the CFP, continue to work with and provide expert advice to its public safety partners related to the Firearms Marking Regulations.**

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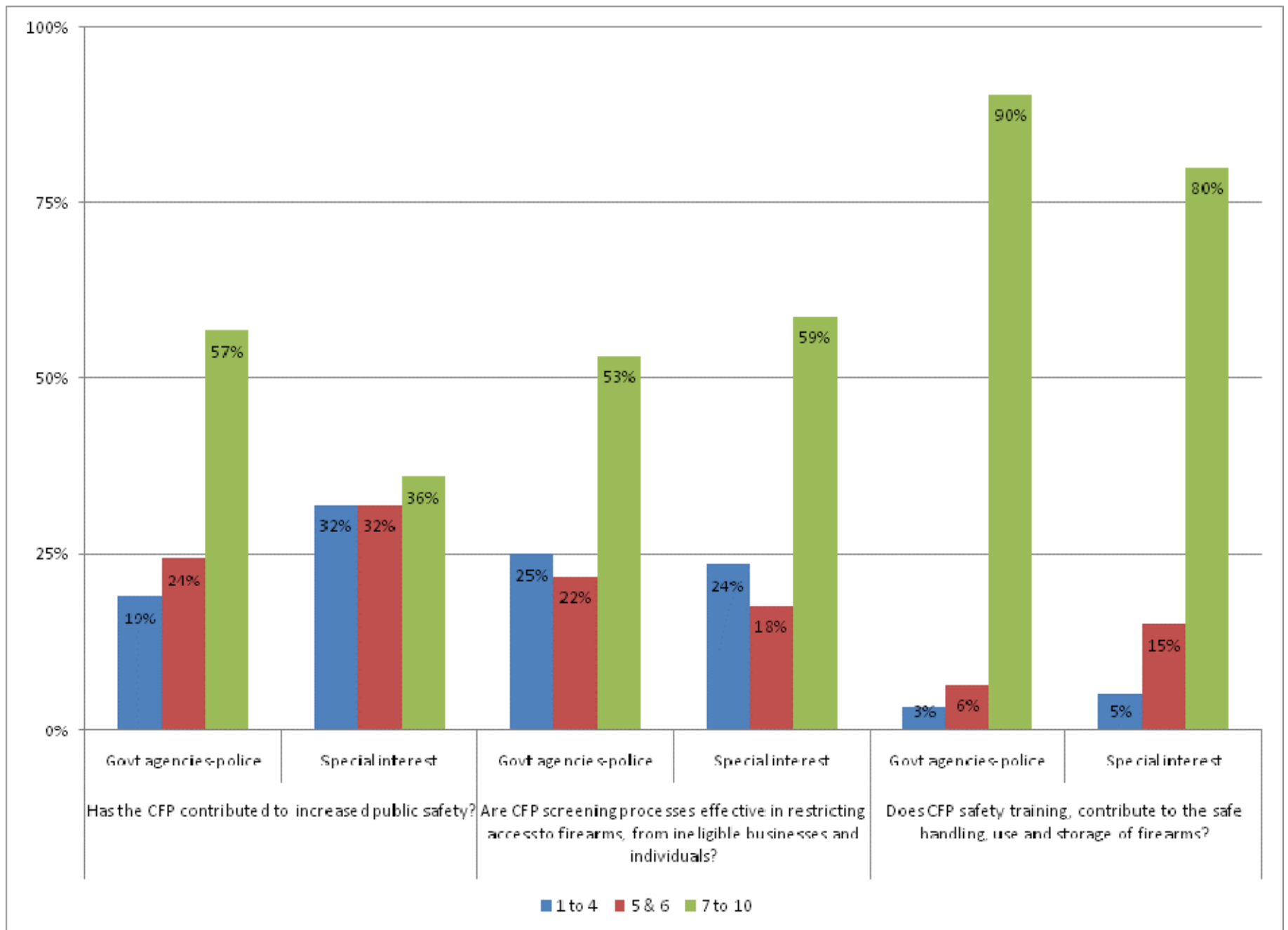
<sup>75</sup> P.63 BC Sol Gen FA Report

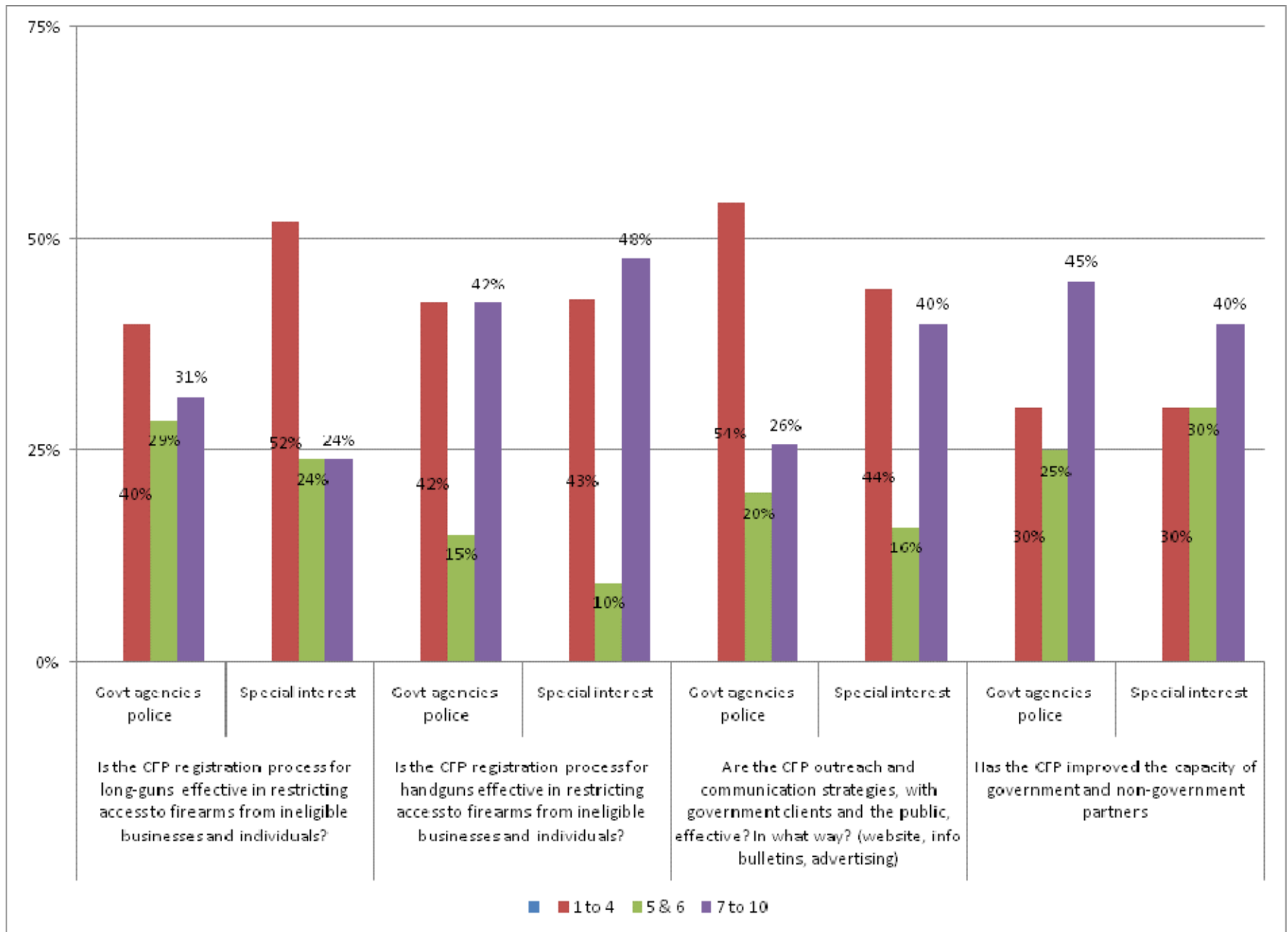
<sup>76</sup> P.6 RCMP Commissioner of Firearms 2007 Report

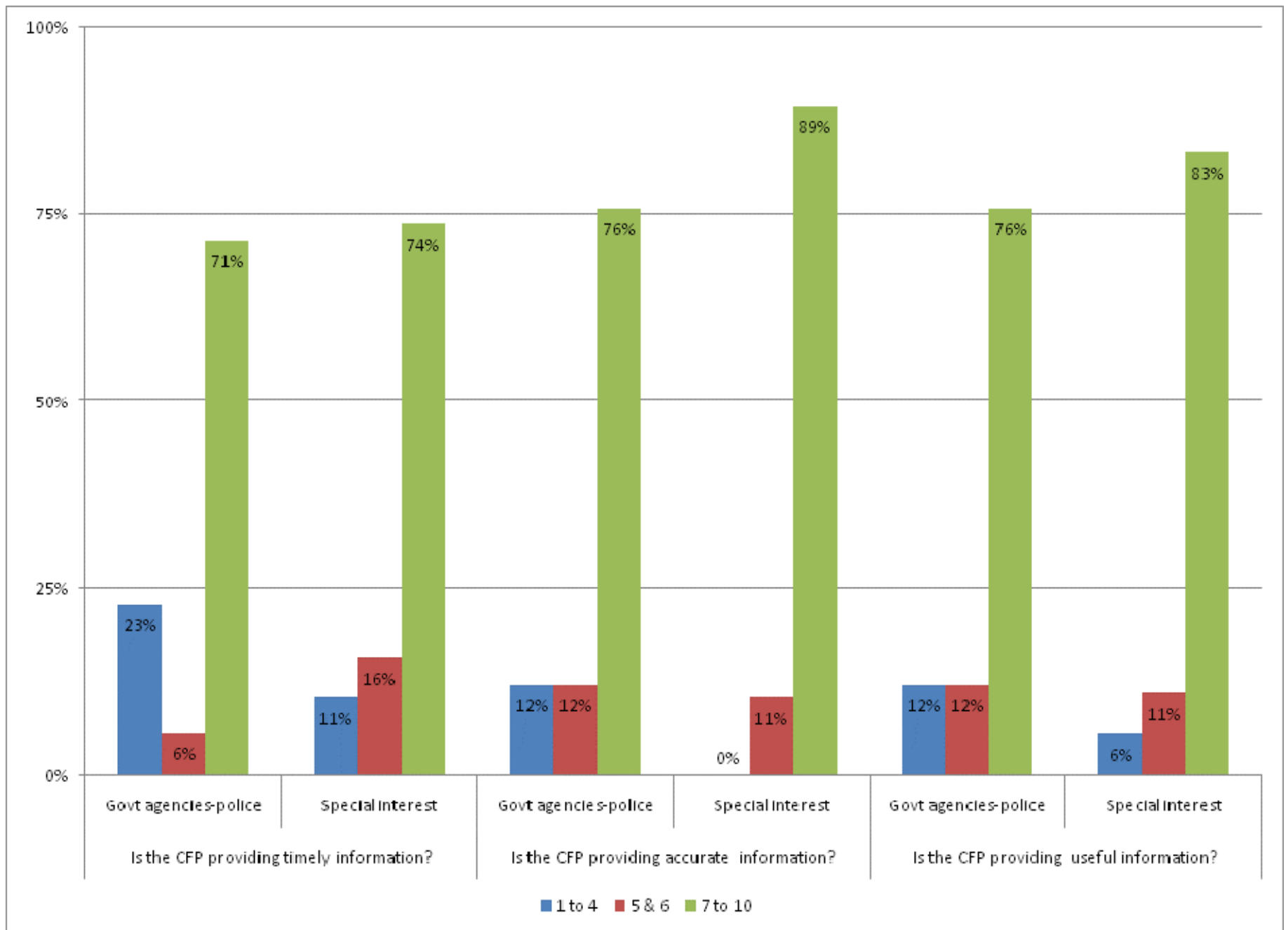
<sup>77</sup> Kelly Sears. "Review of Firearms Licensing Renewal", Report submitted to the CFP, 2009.

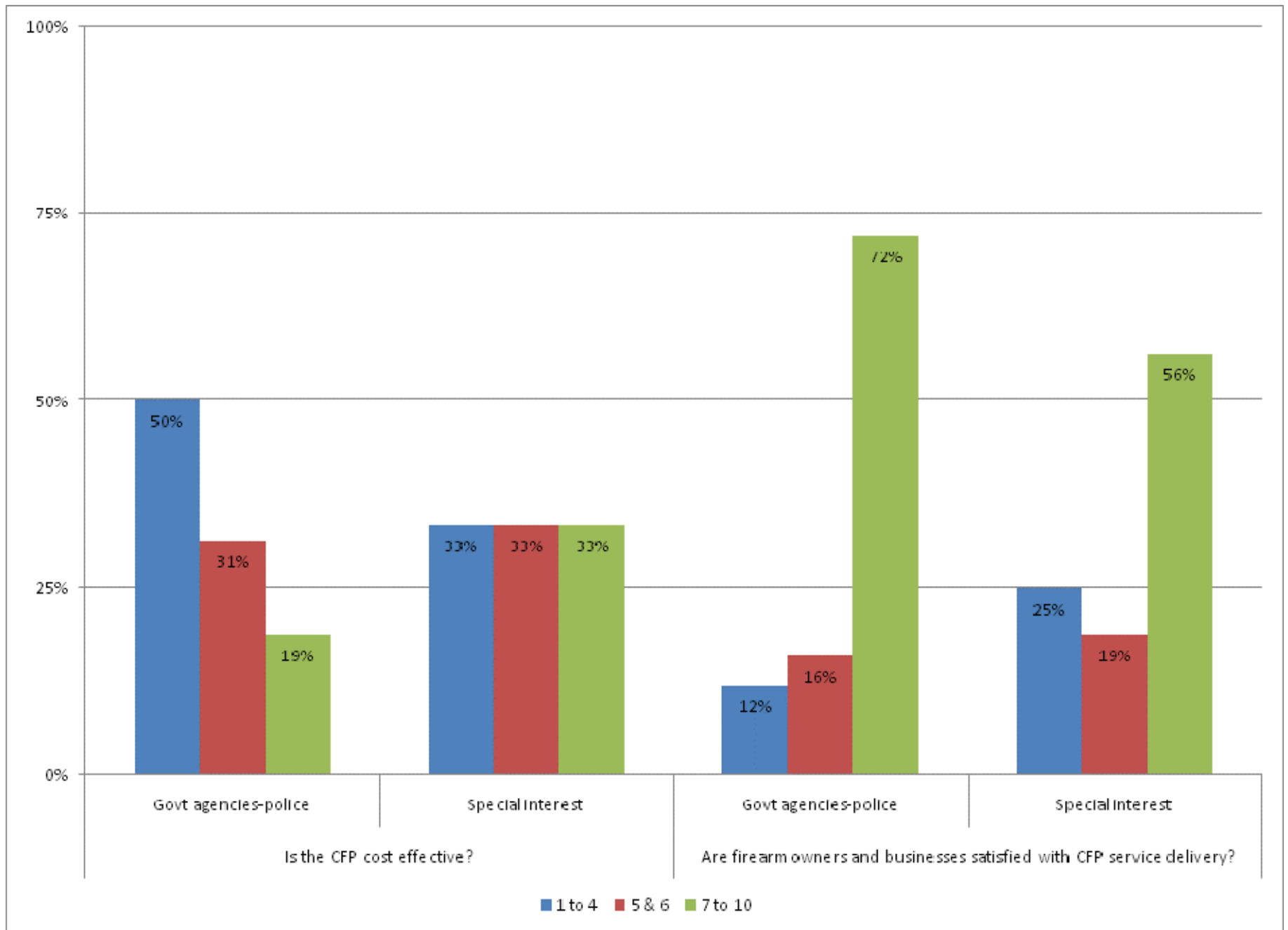


**Tables & Bar graphs**  
**Developed from rated interview questions**









Survey questions	Groups	1 to 4	5 & 6	7 to 10
Has the CFP contributed to increased public safety?	Govt agencies-police	19%	24%	57%
	Special interest	32%	32%	36%
Are CFP screening processes effective in restricting access to firearms, from ineligible businesses and individuals?	Govt agencies-police	25%	22%	53%
	Special interest	24%	18%	59%
Does CFP safety training, contribute to the safe handling, use and storage of firearms?	Govt agencies-police	3%	6%	90%
	Special interest	5%	15%	80%
		1 to 4	5 & 6	7 to 10
Is the CFP registration process for long-guns effective in restricting access to firearms from ineligible businesses and individuals?	Govt agencies-police	40%	29%	31%
	Special interest	52%	24%	24%
Is the CFP registration process for handguns effective in restricting access to firearms from ineligible businesses and individuals?	Govt agencies-police	42%	15%	42%
	Special interest	43%	10%	48%
Are the CFP outreach and communication strategies, with government clients and the public, effective? In what way? (website, info bulletins, advertising)	Govt agencies-police	54%	20%	26%
	Special interest	44%	16%	40%
Has the CFP improved the capacity of government and non-government partners	Govt agencies-police	30%	25%	45%
	Special interest	30%	30%	40%
		1 to 4	5 & 6	7 to 10
Is the CFP providing timely information?	Govt agencies-police	23%	6%	71%
	Special interest	11%	16%	74%
Is the CFP providing accurate information?	Govt agencies-police	12%	12%	76%
	Special interest	0%	11%	89%
Is the CFP providing useful information?	Govt agencies-police	12%	12%	76%
	Special interest	6%	11%	83%
		1 to 4	5 & 6	7 to 10
Is the CFP cost effective?	Govt agencies-police	50%	31%	19%
	Special interest	33%	33%	33%
Are firearm owners and businesses satisfied with CFP service delivery?	Govt agencies-police	12%	16%	72%
	Special interest	25%	19%	56%

# Canadian Firearms Program Evaluation

Statistical Overview

Open-source Data

## **Homicide in Canada, 2007**

### **Statistics Canada, Juristat**

- Police reported 594 homicides in Canada during 2007, 12 fewer than the previous year, resulting in a 3% decrease in the homicide rate (1.8 homicides per 100,000 population).
- This is the second consecutive decline in the homicide rate.
- Homicide rates fell in seven of ten provinces, with Manitoba being the main exception. The 2007 rate [of 5.22] in Manitoba was the highest among all of the provinces and the highest in that province since statistics were first collected in 1961.



## **Homicide in Canada, 2007**

### **Statistics Canada, Juristat**

#### **Homicide victims at equal risk of being shot or stabbed.**

- There were 190 homicides committed by stabbings and 188 were shot, with each method accounting for about one-third of all homicides
- There were 116 victims killed by beating (20%), 50 by strangulation or suffocation (8%) and 16 by a motor vehicle (3%).

## **Homicide in Canada, 2005**

### **Statistics Canada, Juristat**

**According to 2003 health statistics there were a total of 792 deaths in Canada that involved a firearm. (latest year figures were available),**

- Among these, more than three-quarters (78%) were suicides, 17% homicides and 3% accidental discharges of a firearm.**
- Firearm-related homicides account for less than 1 in 5 fatalities involving firearms.**
- The remaining 2% were due to legal intervention (i.e. police shooting) or undetermined intent (Statistics Canada, 2003).**

## **Canadian Association of Emergency Physician's January 2009, Position Statement on Gun Control**

### **Firearms are an important cause of injury and death**

In 2004, 743 Canadians were killed by the use of firearms (2.4 per 100 000 people) and, despite general media focus on urban crime, **76% of these firearm-related deaths were caused by suicide**. Firearm-related injury significantly impacts our health care system. In the 2001/02 fiscal year, **606 hospital admissions were a result of gunshot wounds (GSWs)**. Of these, firearm-related wounds that were intentionally inflicted by another person accounted for 37% (224); unintentional wounds, 34% (205); and suicide attempts, 20% (121).

Many more victims of firearm-related wounds are discharged directly from emergency departments (EDs). Although national data for ED visits is unavailable, in 2004/05, 624 Ontario ED visits resulted from firearm-related injuries versus 199 hospital admissions. In addition to morbidity and mortality, the **total medical cost (including direct care costs and lost productivity) associated with firearm-related injuries in Canada in 1991 was estimated at \$6.6 billion.**

## CAEP Position Statement on Gun Control

### Firearms are an important cause of injury and death

Homicide is among the top 10 causes of death in Canada for those aged 1–34 years. Despite increases in gang violence and homicide as a result of illegal guns, **firearm homicides have decreased significantly since the 1991 introduction of stricter gun control: from 271 (a rate of 0.99 per 100 000 people) in 1991 to 190 (0.58 per 100 000) in 2006.** Those opposed to long gun registration claim that there is a lack of criminal activity involving long guns. Of firearm-related homicides in 2005 in Canada, 25% were by rifles or shotguns, 58% by handguns and 18% by prohibited firearms. Long guns were used in 72% of firearm-related spousal homicides. Additionally, **10 of the 13 police officers killed on the job in the last decade were murdered by long guns (77%).**

**Since the implementation of the gun registry in 1995, a 30% reduction in homicides by long guns has occurred.** Some urban–rural differences may also exist. **A national study of illicit firearms demonstrated that long guns were more commonly used in rural crimes, and handguns were used in most urban crimes involving firearms.** Between 1998 and 2003 in Toronto, 93% of firearm homicides involved a handgun. In 2006, police recovered 61 (36%) firearms that had been used in homicides. Of these, 18 (30%) were registered (i.e., 12 rifles or shotguns, 4 handguns and 2 sawed off rifles or shotguns). **Police were able to determine ownership in 45 (74%) cases: 26 were owned by the accused, 2 by the victim and 17 by another person (10 of these were reported as stolen).**

## Canada Safety Council, 2004

- **In Canada, suicide is the leading cause of death for men age 25-29 and 40-44 and for women aged 30-34. It is the second leading cause of death among youth aged 15-24. For each completed suicide there are 100 attempts, and over 23,000 Canadians are hospitalized each year as a result of a suicide attempt.**
  - **The proportion of completed suicides is highest with a firearm (92%). A home where there are firearms is five times (5X) more likely to be the scene of a suicide than a home without a gun. *\*Reducing access to guns results in fewer suicides.***
  - **Nearly 80% of all firearm deaths in Canada are suicides, compared to 15% of homicides. A firearm is the method used in nearly 20% of all suicide fatalities. *\*Some say that in the absence of a firearm, a suicidal person will seek out another method, but research indicates that is not so.***
- \* Our information contradicts this: Statistics Canada, Cdn Vital Statistics

## Canada Safety Council, 2004

**A Quebec study led by Dr. Robert Simon examined whether suicide rates were related to gun ownership rates.**

**It found that where hunting for sport is common and firearms are more readily available, the firearm suicide rate is higher than in urban areas. Moreover, as the firearm related suicide rate increased, so did the overall death rate by suicide. The researchers concluded that if a suicidal person does not have access to a firearm, there is no evidence that another method will be used, at least not one as lethal as a firearm.**

*Suicide and Firearms: Restricted Access in Canada*

## Firearm Deaths in Canada

Year	<sup>1</sup> Homicides			<sup>2</sup> Suicides			<sup>2</sup> Accidental			Total
	Handgun (% of total)	Long-gun	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other, unspecified	Handgun	Long-gun	Other, unspec.	
2004	* 112- 14%	52- 7%	9	88- 11%	475- 61%	29	1	14- 2%	0	780
2003	110- 15%	45- 6%	6	95- 13%	451- 60%	14	4- 1%	12- 2%	10	747
2002	98- 12%	46- 5%	8	92- 11%	553- 66%	25	8- 1%	9- 1%	2	841
2001	110- 12%	53- 6%	8	106- 12%	569- 64%	25	3	17- 2%	0	891

\* First number denotes number of deaths. Second percentage is in relation to total homicide, suicide& accidental deaths, in the far right column.

1. Firearm homicide source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey

2. Firearm suicide and accidental death source: Chief Provincial and Territorial Coroners from across Canada

### Firearm Deaths in Ontario

Ontario	Homicides			Suicides			Accidental		Totals
Year	Handgun (%of total)	Long-gun	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other, unspecified	Handgun	Long-gun	Homicide Suicide & Accidental
2005	* 69- 30%	12- 5%	3	24- 11%	116- 51%	1	1	2	228
2004	46- 24%	8- 4%	1	24- 12%	108- 55%	4	0	4	195
2003	44- 21%	8- 4%	2	38- 18%	111- 54%	1	1	2	207
2002	50- 23%	13- 6%	0	27- 12%	129- 58%	0	0	2	221
2001	35- 17%	12- 6%	1	34- 17%	117- 58%	0	2	2	203
2000	32- 15%	15- 7%	0	35- 17%	122- 59%	0	1	3	208
1999	24- 10%	21- 9%	3	34- 14%	161- 65%	0	1	3	247
1998	22- 10%	12- 5%	0	37- 16%	151- 66%	1	0	7	230
1997	38- 15%	21- 8%	0	44- 17%	156- 60%	0	1	2	262
1996	39- 14%	20- 7%	1	46- 16%	178- 62%	0	2	2	288

\* First number denotes number of deaths. Second percentage is in relation to total homicide, suicide & accidental deaths, in the far right column.

1. Firearm homicide source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

2. Firearm suicide and accidental death source: Chief Provincial Coroner of Ontario.



**Firearm Deaths in Atlantic Region, Canada**  
(New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland & Labrador)

Year	Homicides			Suicides			Accidental			Totals Homicide Suicide & Accidental
	Handgun (% of total)	Long-gun	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other	
2005	* 5- 7%	11- 15%	0	11- 15%	48- 64%	0	0	0	0	75
2004	3- 4%	2- 3%	1	6- 8%	68- 85%	0	0	0	0	80
2003	1- 1%	5- 5%	0	9- 10%	66- 70%	1	1	2	9	94
2002	4- 5%	1- 1%	2	8- 10%	66- 80%	0	1	0	0	82
2001	1- 2%	3- 5%	0	4- 7%	49- 80%	2	0	2	0	61
2000	5- 5%	7- 7%	1	6- 6%	73- 77%	0	0	2	1	95
1999	2- 2%	4- 4%	0	7- 7%	83- 78%	5	0	5	0	106
1998	6- 6%	3- 3%	0	7- 8%	76- 82%	1	0	0	0	93
1997	3- 3%	5- 5%	0	6- 6%	73- 78%	2	0	4	0	93

\* First number denotes number of deaths. Second percentage is in relation to total homicide, suicide & accidental deaths, in the far right column.

1. Firearm homicide source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

2. Firearm suicide and accidental death source: Chief Provincial Coroners; New Brunswick; Nova Scotia; Newfoundland & Labrador; and Prince Edward Island

### Firearm Deaths in British Columbia, Canada

Year	Homicides			Suicides			Accidental			Totals
	Handgun (% of total)	Long-gun	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other	Homicide Suicide & Accidental
2005	* 13- 11%	9- 8%	13- 11%	15- 13%	65- 56%	1	0	1	0	117
2004	30- 23%	6- 5%	4	20- 15%	66- 51%	0	1	3	0	130
2003	27- 22%	6- 5%	3	22- 18%	62- 50%	1	1	2	0	124
2002	13- 10%	16- 13%	4	25- 20%	63- 50%	2	2	2	0	127
2001	18- 16%	5- 4%	1	20- 17%	68- 59%	2	0	1	0	115
2000	20- 17%	13- 11%	2	17- 14%	66- 55%	0	1	2	0	121
1999	23- 15%	9- 6%	5	21- 14%	94- 61%	1	1	1	0	155
1998	9- 7%	10- 8%	6	23- 17%	77- 58%	3	2	2	0	132
1997	16- 9%	18- 10%	4	25- 14%	113- 62%	2	2	2	0	182
1996	23- 14%	25- 15%	0	29- 17%	85- 50%	0	3	5	0	170

\* First number denotes number of deaths. Second percentage is in relation to total homicide, suicide & accidental deaths, in the far right column.

1. Firearm homicide source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

2. Firearm suicide and accidental death source: Chief Provincial Coroner of British Columbia.

## Firearm Deaths in Prairie Region of Canada (Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba)

Year	Homicides			Suicides			Accidental			Totals
	Handgun (% of total)	Long-gun	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other	Homicide Suicide & Accidental
2006				16	115	12	0	4	0	
2005	* 20- 11%	22- 13%	8	9- 5%	105- 60%	9	0	2	1	176
2004	14- 8%	25- 14%	1	18- 10%	110- 63%	1	0	6	0	175
2003	12- 6%	15- 8%	0	15- 8%	139- 74%	1	1	4	0	187
2002	14- 8%	8- 4%	2	14- 8%	135- 74%	1	3	3	2	182
2001	7- 3%	18- 9%	3	18- 9%	148- 73%	2	1	6	0	203

\* First number denotes number of deaths. Second percentage is in relation to total homicide, suicide & accidental deaths, in the far right column.

1. Firearm homicide source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

2. Firearm suicide and accidental death source: Chief Provincial Coroners of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

## Firearm Deaths in Quebec

	Homicides			Suicides			Accidental			Totals
Year	Handgun (% of total)	Long-gun	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other	Homicide Suicide & Accidental
2006				19	112	21	0	0	0	
2005	* 21- 10%	12- 5%	4	11- 5%	144- 66%	27	0	0	0	219
2004	19- 10%	9- 5%	2	20- 10%	117- 61%	24	0	1	0	192
2003	26- 21%	9- 7%	1	11- 9%	61- 50%	10	0	2	1	121
2002	17- 8%	8- 4%	0	17- 8%	149- 69%	22	2	1	0	216
2001	49- 17%	12- 4%	3	30- 10%	171- 59%	19	0	6	0	290
2000	41- 14%	25- 8%	4	29- 10%	157- 53%	37	2	2	1	298
1999	37- 12%	18- 6%	4	31- 10%	203- 66%	9	1	5	0	308

\* First number denotes number of deaths. Second percentage is in relation to total homicide, suicide & accidental deaths, in the far right column.

1. Firearm homicide source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

2. Firearm suicide and accidental death source: Chief Provincial Coroner of Quebec.

### Firearm Deaths in Northern Territories of Canada (Yukon, North West Territories and Nunavut)

Year	Homicides			Suicides			Accidental			Totals Homicide Suicide & Accidental
	Handgun	Long-gun (% of total)	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other	Handgun	Long-gun	Other	
2004	0	* 2- 25%	0	0	6- 75%	0	0	0	0	8
2003	0	2- 14%	0	0	12- 86%	0	0	0	0	14
2002	0	0	0	1- 8%	11- 85%	0	0	1- 8%	0	13
2001	0	3- 16%	0	0	16- 84%	0	0	0	0	19
2000	0	0	0	0	13- 100%	0	0	0	0	13
1999	0	0	0		16- 94%	0	0	1 - 6%	0	17

\* First number denotes number of deaths. Second percentage is in relation to total homicide, suicide & accidental deaths, in the far right column.

1. Firearm suicide and accidental death source: Chief Territorial Coroners of the North West Territories, Yukon and Nunavut.

## Statistics Canada observations and analysis of Coroner Firearm data

### Observations and analysis of data on deaths attributed to firearms-related suicide or unintentional injury

#### Data source and analysis

Rates of death (deaths per 100,000 population) were calculated by dividing the number of deaths in each year for which data were available by the provincial population in that year. For inter-censal years, Statistics Canada's provincial population estimates were used. Rates were calculated separately for suicides and unintentional deaths. Trend analysis was used to assess the significance change in the rates over time in each province, for unintentional deaths and suicides attributed to rifles/shotguns. A pre-determined level of significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ . Note that statistical testing was not performed in the assessment of inter-jurisdictional comparisons.

## Statistics Canada data Firearm-related suicide

Table 1. Suicide-RIS rates per 100,000 population

	NF	PEI	NS	NB	Québec	Ontario	Manitoba	Sask	Alberta	BC	NWT	Yukon	Nunavut
1985		0.7833		5.389							16.5435		
1986		1.5575		7.1709		2.6806	4.7633				14.626	32.6811	
1987		3.1111		5.9076		2.4782	5.1001			3.47523	16.3526	19.4553	
1988		0.7735		6.0244		2.3064	4.5371			1.86174	7.18301	11.2748	
1989		1.5376		5.8486		2.5031	4.0777			2.93945	19.2891	18.4427	
1990		3.8303		5.6748		2.4374	3.7082			2.79566	25.4626	7.20098	
1991		4.6045		5.4995		2.522	4.1456			3.73503	23.2282	10.3781	
1992		3.0586		5.4805		2.2044	4.0442			3.22911	20.2886	6.64187	
1993		0.7568		7.4785		2.2174	3.4001			3.08347	27.6181	9.8824	
1994		0.7495		5.8651		1.8949	2.7599			2.66616	22.1784	6.73514	
1995		2.232		7.1906		1.7443	2.6569			2.91236	16.8972	6.56922	
1996		1.4733	3.8651	2.9243		1.6061	3.4386			2.19396	19.1626	9.55932	
1997	2.9038	1.4694	2.7883	3.8536		1.3893	2.8166			2.86181	43.2329	9.43663	
1998	2.0373	1.4725	2.6827	5.0629		1.3284	2.022		2.8626	1.93318	29.4002	19.2666	
1999	2.2497	1.4674	4.0692	3.9967	2.772	1.3992	2.5383		2.7427	2.34336	24.5978	12.9967	7.45657
2000	2.2725	1.4654	2.5699	4.5302	2.134	1.044	2.5275		2.5957	1.63399	4.93839	16.436	21.8182
2001	0.9579	4.3901	1.716	2.9338	2.3118	0.9834	2.6058	2.5997	3.0097	1.6673	17.1476	6.63812	24.8924
2002	2.3101	2.9211	2.2472	3.865	2.0011	1.0659	1.3846	2.912	2.888	1.53083	7.23083	6.63636	20.8776
2003	2.8934	2.1846	2.6695	2.9286	0.8139	0.9052	2.582	3.7196	2.2775	1.49205	7.10379	6.54151	24.0014
2004	2.5135	0.7254	3.305	3.0583	1.5499	0.8695	1.4524	2.9149	1.9949	1.57001	0	12.9555	6.74969
2005	1.5565	0.7237	2.2436	2.2627	1.8952	0.9232	1.7885	3.1312	1.585	1.52573	11.703		19.9913
2006		0.7245			1.4639		1.2736	2.3291	2.2845	1.15734	4.71687		19.7368

## Statistics Canada analysis Firearm-related suicide

### Findings

#### *Firearms-related suicide*

Rates of death due to firearms-related suicide varied widely among jurisdictions and over time (Table 1). The highest rates were observed in Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and the lowest were in Ontario.

Differences also emerged within regions. In the Atlantic provinces, rates were generally higher in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and lower in PEI. In the prairie region, rates were somewhat higher in Saskatchewan than in the other provinces, at least over the few recent years for which data from all prairie provinces were provided. Rates in Québec were fairly similar to those in Newfoundland/Labrador, Manitoba, Alberta and BC.

Statistically significant decreases in firearms-related suicide rates over time occurred in New Brunswick (1985-2005), Ontario (1986-2005), Manitoba (1986-2006), Alberta (1998-2006) and BC (1987-2006) (Table 3).



## Statistics Canada data

### Firearm-related unintentional death

Table 2.  
Rates of firearms-related unintentional death, by jurisdiction, Canada, 1985-2006

	NB	Quebec	Ontario	Manitoba	SK	Alberta	BC	NWT	Nunavut
1985	0.4145404			0.1847968			0.196711	3.6763354	
1986	0.2758035		0.1695251	0.3664071			0.0641981	3.6565077	
1987	0.2747706		0.1762707	0.0910727			0.1563536	1.8169595	
1988	0.2738383		0.1422444	0			0.0303876	7.183005	
1989	0.5440534		0.1088299	0.2718475			0	3.5071107	
1990	0.2702264		0.1068182	0			0.0576627	3.3950093	
1991	0.2682662		0.1150733	0.1802429			0.1121263	0	
1992	0.1336714		0.0662264	0.0898718			0.0544114	5.0721514	
1993	0.2670897		0.0748476	0.0894758			0.105904	0	
1994	0.1332973		0.0462182	0			0.2064902	2.4642681	
1995	0.266319		0.0547946	0			0.1013032	4.8277693	
1996	0.2658471		0.0360911	0.0881688			0.1004249	2.3953243	
1997	0.3986483		0.0267182	0			0.0498586	0	
1998	0		0.0615817	0.0879109		0.1724464	0.0742722	0	
1999	0.3996744	0.0819302	0.0347634	0.3501122		0.1354438	0.0245191	0	3.7282828
2000	0.2664826	0.0679622	0.0342308	0		0.0998356	0.0971956	0	0
2001	0.1333529	0.0811141	0.0336201	0.1737189	0.1999732	0.0981438	0.0721957	0	0
2002	0	0.0402915	0.0165261	0.1730727	0.4016524	0.064178	0.0951518	0	3.4795922
2003	0.3993493	0.0400283	0.0244647	0.0860662	0.3015888	0.0316318	0.0234728	0	0
2004	0	0.0132468	0.0322054	0.0854296	0.4020513	0.0311704		0	0
2005	0	0	0.023875	0	0.2020112	0.030481		0	6.663779
2006		0			0.4050551			0	3.2894737

## Statistics Canada analysis Firearm-related unintentional death

### *Firearms-related unintentional death*

Inter-jurisdictional comparisons are limited by the lack of data from some jurisdictions, and by missing data for many years in some of the jurisdictions for which data were provided (Table 2). Rates were consistently higher in the Northwest Territories than in the seven provinces for which data were available (New Brunswick, Québec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC). Among these provinces, rates tended to be higher in Saskatchewan and New Brunswick than elsewhere.

Significant decreases over time occurred in New Brunswick (1985-2005), Québec (1999-2006, Ontario (1986-2005), Alberta (1998-2005) and the Northwest Territories (1985-2006) (Table 3).

## Statistics Canada trend analysis Firearm-related suicide & unintentional death

**Table 3. Summary of trend analysis, firearms-related suicides & unintentional deaths.**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Unintentional</b>	<b>Suicides: Rifle/Shotgun</b>
NF/Labrador		NS (1997-2006)
PEI		NS (1985-2006)
NS		NS (1996-2005)
NB	* (1985-2005)	* (1985-2005)
Québec	* (1999-2006)	† (1999-2006)
Ontario	* (1986-2005)	* (1986-2005)
Manitoba	NS (1985-2006)	* (1986-2006)
Saskatchewan	NS (2001-2006)	NS (2001-2006)
Alberta	* (1998-2005)	* (1998-2006)
BC	NS (1987-2005)	* (1987-2006)
NWT	* (1985-2006)	NS (1985-2006)
Yukon		† (1986-2004)
Nunavut	NS (1999-2006)	NS (1999-2006)

\* Rate declined statistically significantly ( $p < 0.05$ )

† Rate declined; trend fell just short of statistical significance ( $p < 0.10$ )

NS: Trend not statistically significant

# Statistics Canada data Firearm-related suicide

## Total Suicide and Firearm-related Suicide Deaths in Canada

Rate per 100,000 population

Year	Total Suicide	Firearm-related Suicide	% of suicide death rate, related to firearms
2000	11.7	2.2	18.8
2001	11.9	2.1	17.6
2002	11.6	2	17.2
2003	11.9	2	16.8
2004	11.3	1.8	15.9
2005	11.6	1.8	15.5

1. From 2000-2005, the rate for total suicides fluctuated slightly, but was basically stable. During the same period, the firearms-related suicide rate showed a downward trend, and the percentage of the suicide death rate that also declined (from 18.8% in 2000 to 15.5% in 2005).
2. The overall rate of suicide has been fairly stable over this six-year period, however the contribution to that rate accounted for by firearms-related suicides has steadily decreased.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics

## **Homicide in Canada, 2007, Statistics Canada, Juristat**

- **Contrary to a decline in homicides overall, gang-related homicides continued to increase in 2007 and accounted for about one in five homicides in Canada.**
- **Generally, Canadian homicide victims are at equal risk of being either shot or stabbed, with each method accounting for about one-third (1/3) of all homicides.**
- **The use of handguns to commit homicide continues to rise, while the use of rifles/shotguns continues to decline. In 2007, two-thirds (2/3) of firearms related homicides were committed with a handgun.**

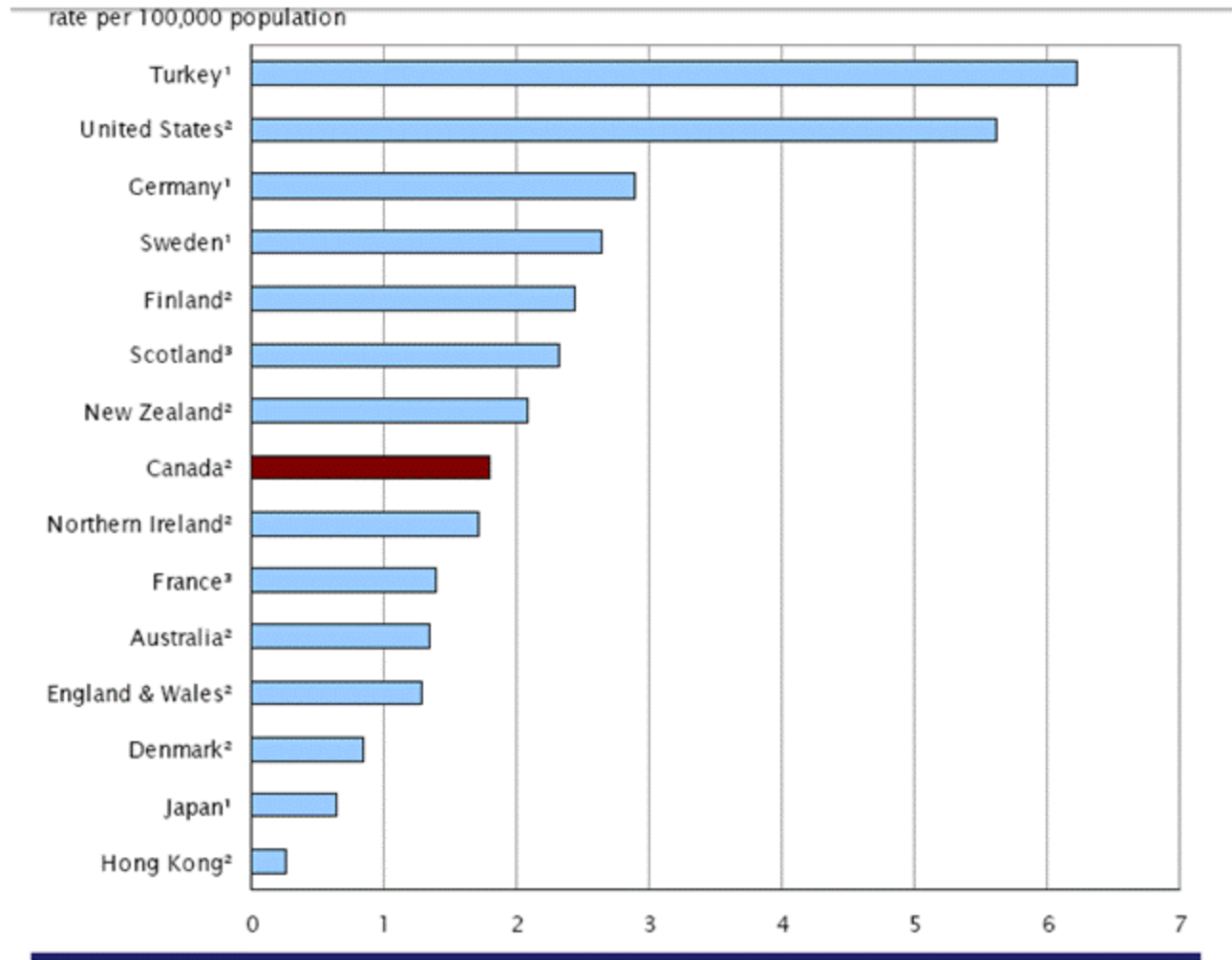
## **Homicide in Canada, 2007**

**Statistics Canada, Juristat**

- **Homicides are a relatively rare occurrence in Canada and have been generally declining over the past 30 years. In 2007, homicides made up less than one percent (1%) of all violent crime in Canada.**
- **Homicide is the only criminal offence that is truly comparable among nations. Compared to other countries, Canada's homicide rate continues to be about one-third (1/3) that of the United States, but comparable to Australia, New Zealand and many European nations.**

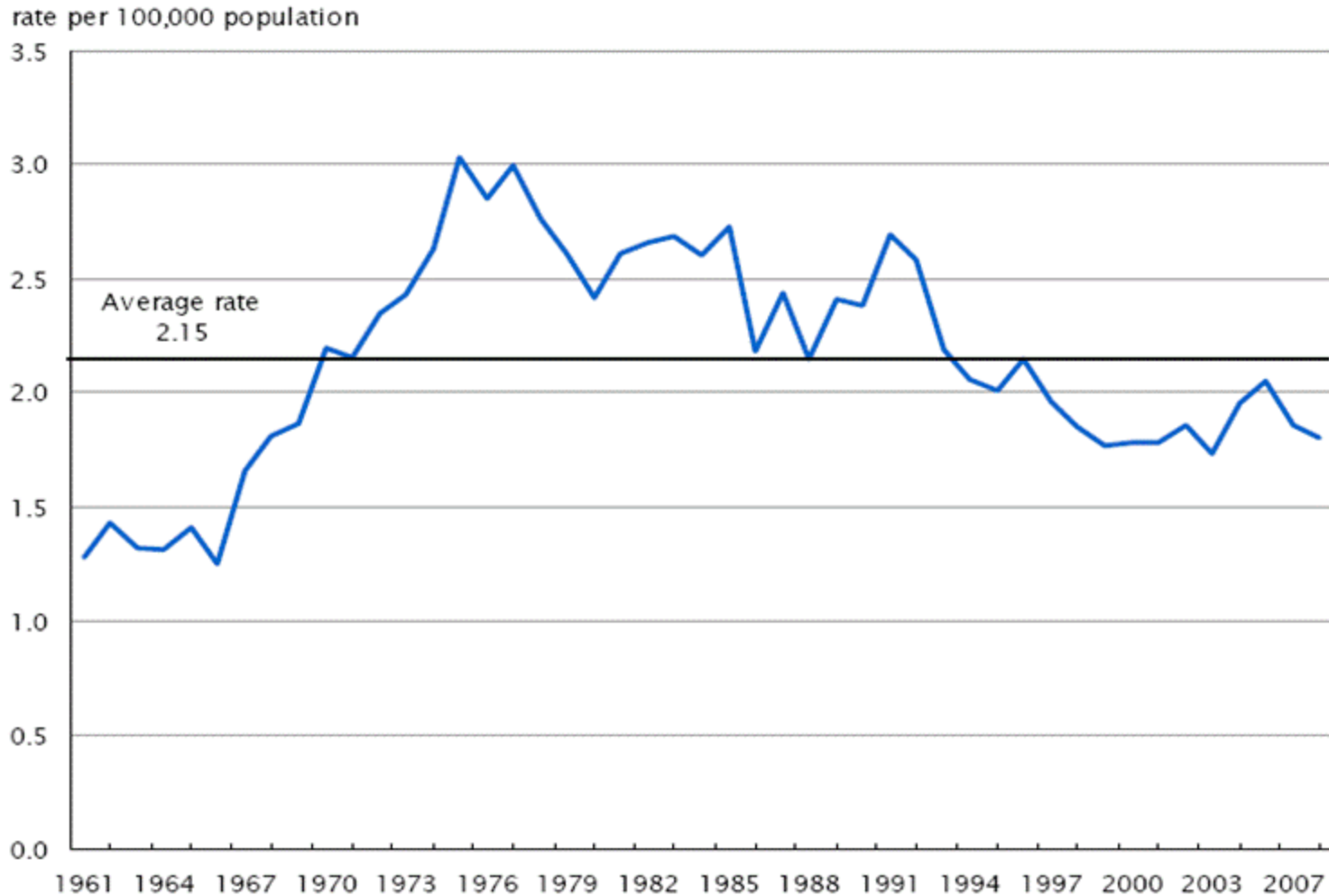
# Homicide in Canada, 2007

## Statistics Canada, Juristat



1. Figures reflect 2005 data.  
2. Figures reflect 2007 data.  
3. Figures reflect 2006 data.  
Source: Statistics Canada, Interpol Ottawa and national statistical office websites.

## Homicide in Canada, 2007 Statistics Canada, Juristat



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

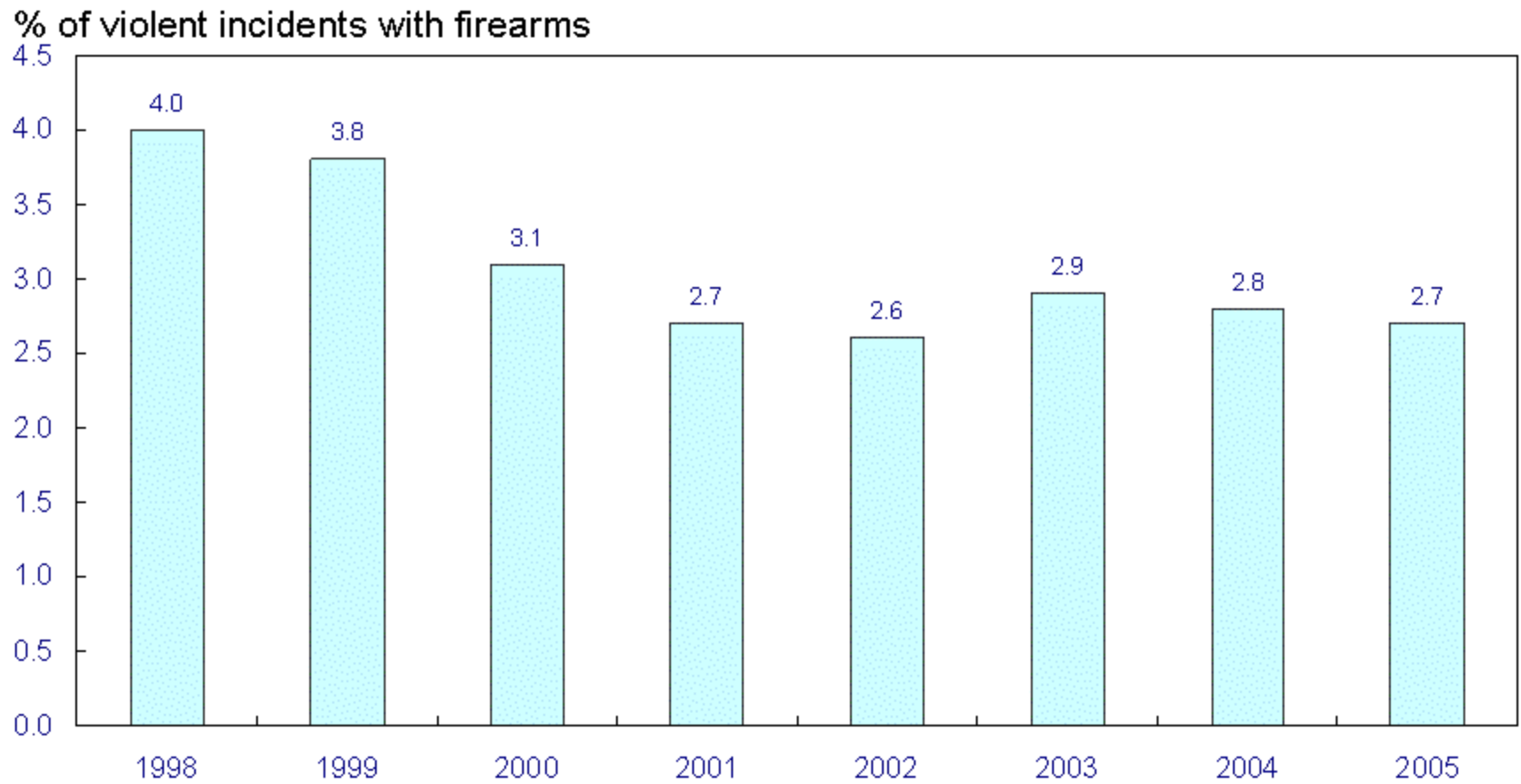


## **Firearms and Violent Crime, 2006**

### **Statistics Canada, Juristat**

- **The large majority of police-reported violent crimes do not involve a firearm.** In 2006, a firearm was used against 2.4% of the victims of violence crime. Physical force and threatening behavior were much more common, accounting for three-quarters (3/4) of all victimizations.
- **Victims of robbery and assault accounted for about three-quarters of the total number of firearm related victimizations in 2006.**
- **Although the incidents of attempted murder and homicide was much lower, a firearm was used against approx one-third (33%) of victims of these offences,** which is substantially higher than the proportions for robbery (14%) and assault (1%)

## Statistics Canada Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Presence of firearms in violent crime down



**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR2 Trend file).

# Homicide in Canada, 2007

Statistics Canada, Juristat

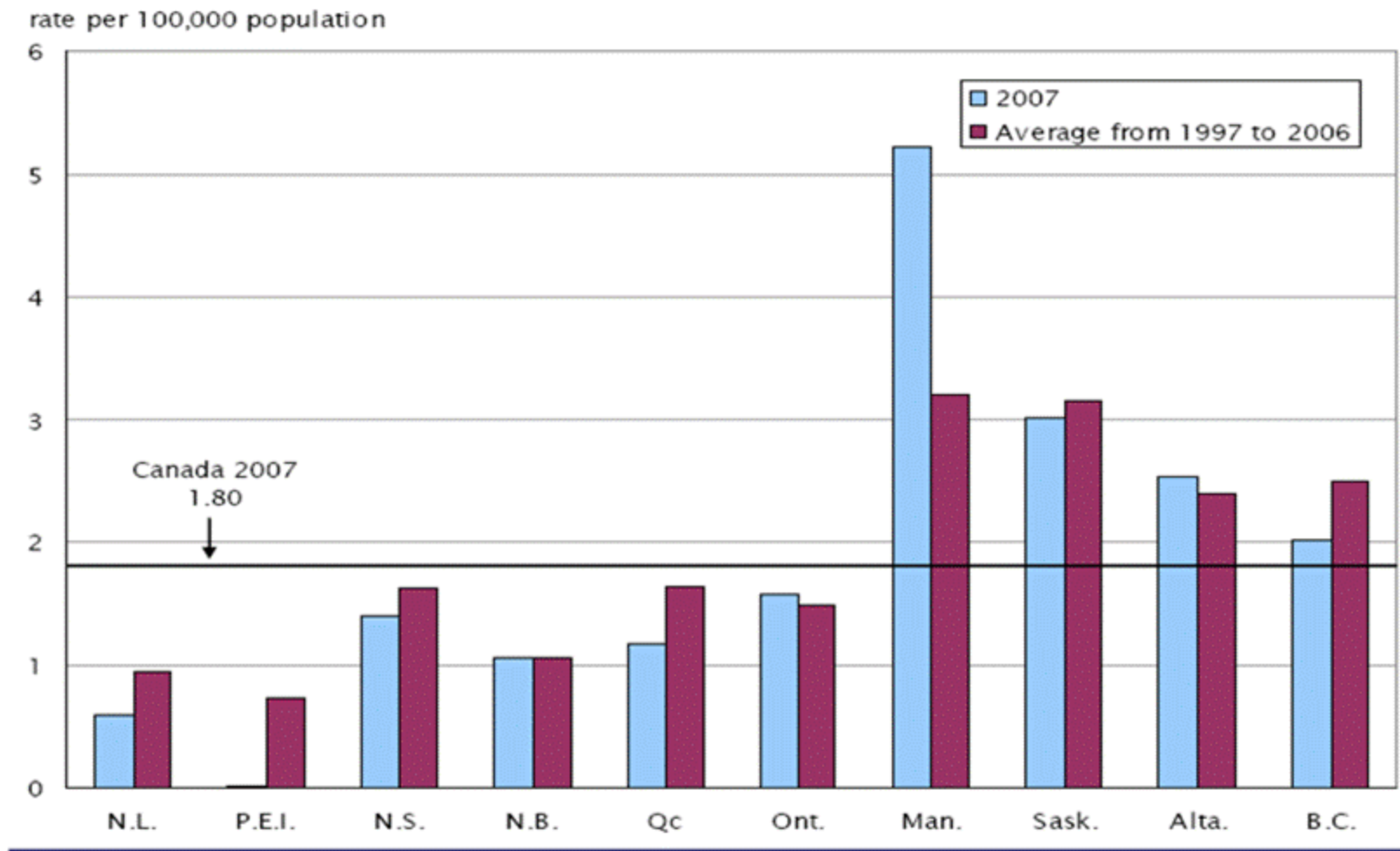
## Homicide rates highest in the west and the north

- Over the past 10 years, the western provinces, particularly Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and the territories have consistently reported the highest homicide rates in the country.
- Last year was no exception, as the highest rate was in Manitoba, followed by Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador continue to report the lowest rates.

# Homicide in Canada, 2007

## Statistics Canada, Juristat

Homicide rate: averages from 1997 to 2006; and 2007



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

# Homicide in Canada, 2007

## Statistics Canada, Juristat

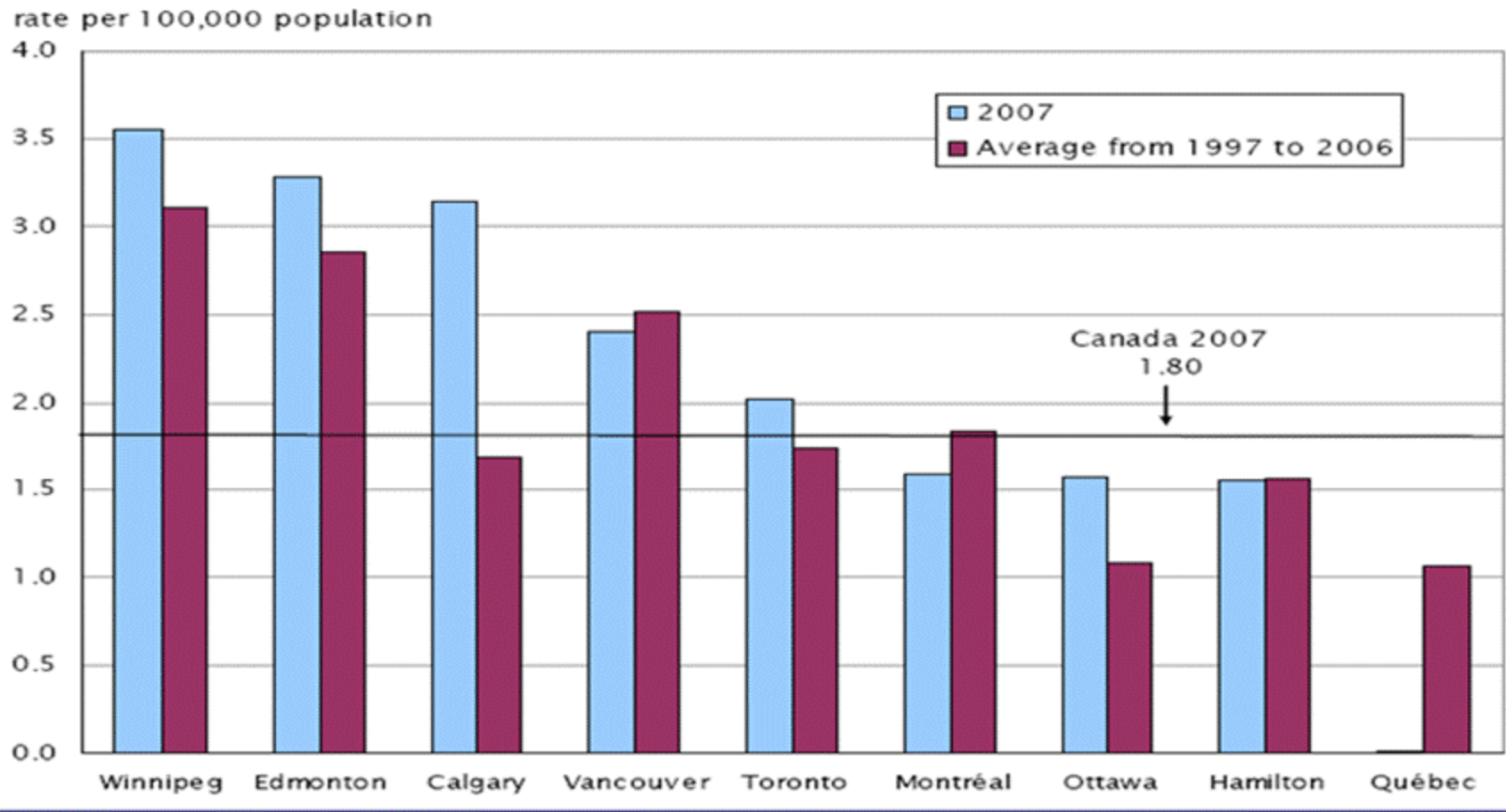
**Among the major Canadian Cities (CMAs) homicide rates are highest in the west**

- In 2007, three large metropolitan areas, all in western Canada, reported homicide rates in excess of 3.0 per 100,000 population: Winnipeg, Edmonton and Calgary. Saskatoon, although a smaller metropolitan area, actually reported the highest rate of all cities (3.60).
- Toronto's rate ranked in the middle of the nine largest cities. (In absolute numbers, Toronto accounted for 1 in 5 homicides in Canada in 2007, adjusted for population)
- Calgary's rate in 2007 was much higher than the average of the previous 10 years, as the homicide rate there has increased sharply since 2003.
- Quebec City reported having no homicides in 2007, marking the first time since CMA data were first available in 1981 that any metropolitan area with over 500,000 population did not have any homicides.

# Homicide in Canada, 2007

## Statistics Canada, Juristat

Homicide rates in Major Canadian cities averaging between 1997 & 2006, and 2007



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

## **Homicide in Canada, 2007**

### **Statistics Canada, Juristat**

#### **The use of handguns to commit homicide increasing**

- Although the overall rate of homicides committed with a firearm has generally been declining since the mid-1970s, the use of handguns has generally been increasing since the mid-1980s. The use of rifles or shotguns in homicides continues to decline **(Chart 5)**.
- Of the 188 firearms used to commit homicide in 2007, two-thirds (2/3) were handguns, 16 more than in 2006. There were also 32 homicides committed with rifles/shotguns in 2007 and 17 with sawed-off rifles/shotguns, both down from 2006.
- Homicides committed with handguns are primarily an urban phenomenon. Within the nation's metropolitan areas, 81% of all firearm homicides were committed with a handgun in 2007, **compared to 29% in the rest of Canada**. Next page. **(The Non-Census Metropolitan Areas between 1996 and 2005 averaged 65% long-gun homicides vs. 31% handgun homicides.)**

## Statistics Canada Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

### Victims of Homicide Committed with Firearm Non-Census Metropolitan Area (Less than 100,000 population) (Excluding the Territories)

Canada	Homicides					Total Shootings
Year	Handgun	Rifle Shotgun	Sawed-off rifle/shotgun	Fully automatic firearm	Unknown type	
2005	*15- 20%	45- 61%	4- 5%	1	9	74
2004	15- 33%	23- 50%	5- 11%	0	3	46
2003	15- 35%	22- 51%	6- 14%	0	0	43
2002	14- 27%	34- 65%	2- 4%	0	2	52
2001	21- 36%	32- 54%	4- 7%	1	1	59
2000	25- 38%	34- 52%	3- 5%	1	2	65
1999	22- 33%	39- 59%	2- 3%	1	2	66
1998	15- 26%	35- 61%	5- 9%	1	1	57
1997	22- 28%	50- 64%	3- 4%	0	3	78
1996	31- 33%	52- 55%	10- 11%	1	0	94

\* First number denotes number of deaths. Second percentage is in relation to total homicides with: handguns; rifle/shotgun; sawed off rifle/shotgun; fully automatic firearm; & unknown type firearm deaths, noted in the far right column.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

(The above Non-Census Metropolitan Areas, between 1996 and 2005 average 65% long-gun homicides vs. 31% handgun homicides.)

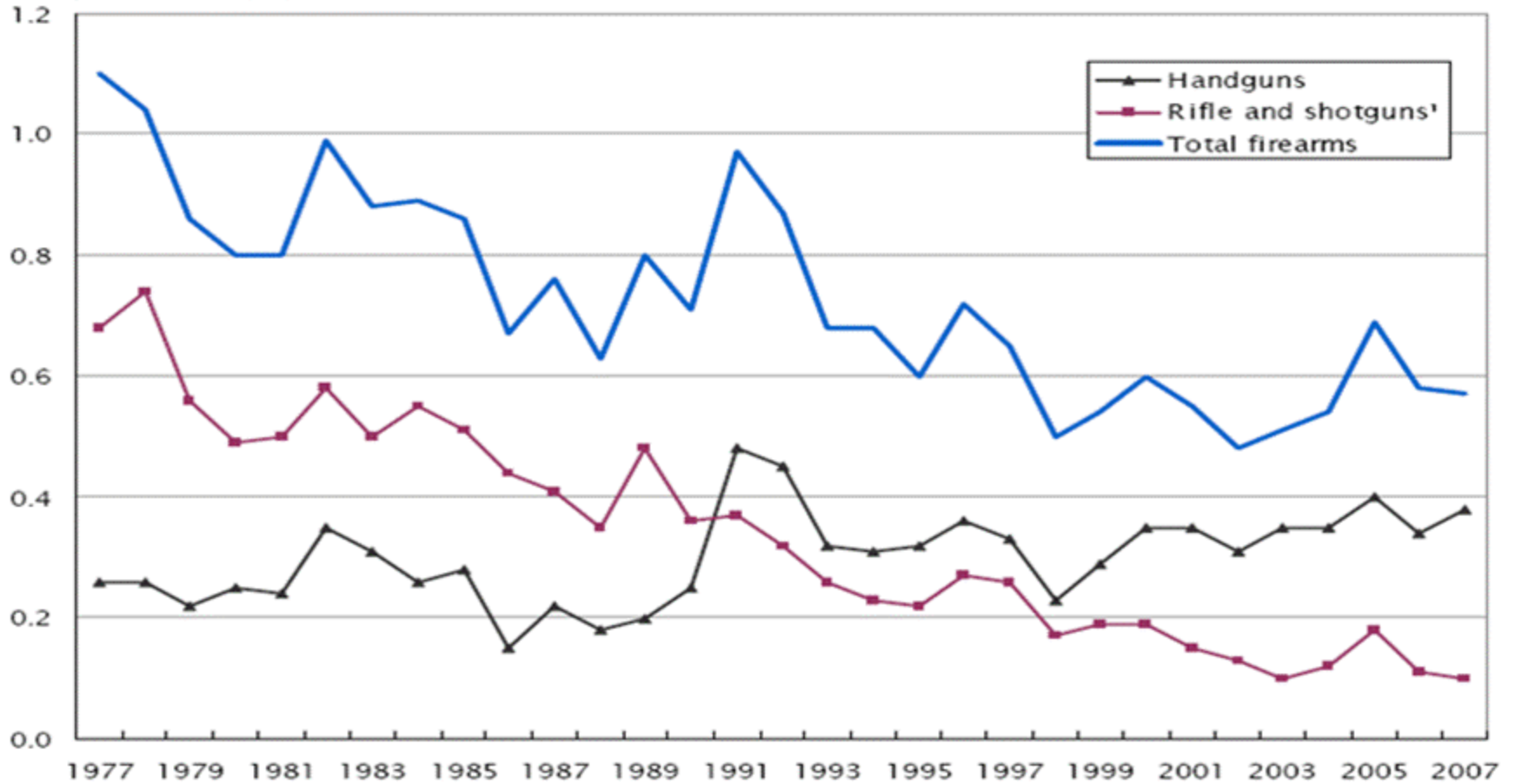


# Homicide in Canada, 2007

## Statistics Canada, Juristat

### Homicides committed with firearms

rate per 100,000 population



1. Excludes sawed-off rifles/shotguns.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

## Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, 2008

### REGIONAL TRENDS IN CANADA FIREARM

- **Prairie (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba)** - Long guns are preferred by the criminal element throughout the Prairie provinces as this type of firearm tends to be more readily available in rural areas and thus targeted for criminal acquisition.
- **Ontario** - In Ontario, both handguns and long guns are the illegal firearms of preference throughout the province, although certain areas appear to favor one type over another.
- In larger urban centers such as the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and cities in southwestern Ontario handguns are preferred, whereas long guns are the weapon of choice in some smaller urban (e.g. Kingston, Halton and Sault Ste. Marie) and rural areas.
- Many sawed-off shotguns (and other long guns) that are recovered on the streets of Toronto have been found to originate from break and enters carried out in the large cottage area just north of the GTA.

## **Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, 2008**

### **REGIONAL FIREARM TRENDS IN CANADA**

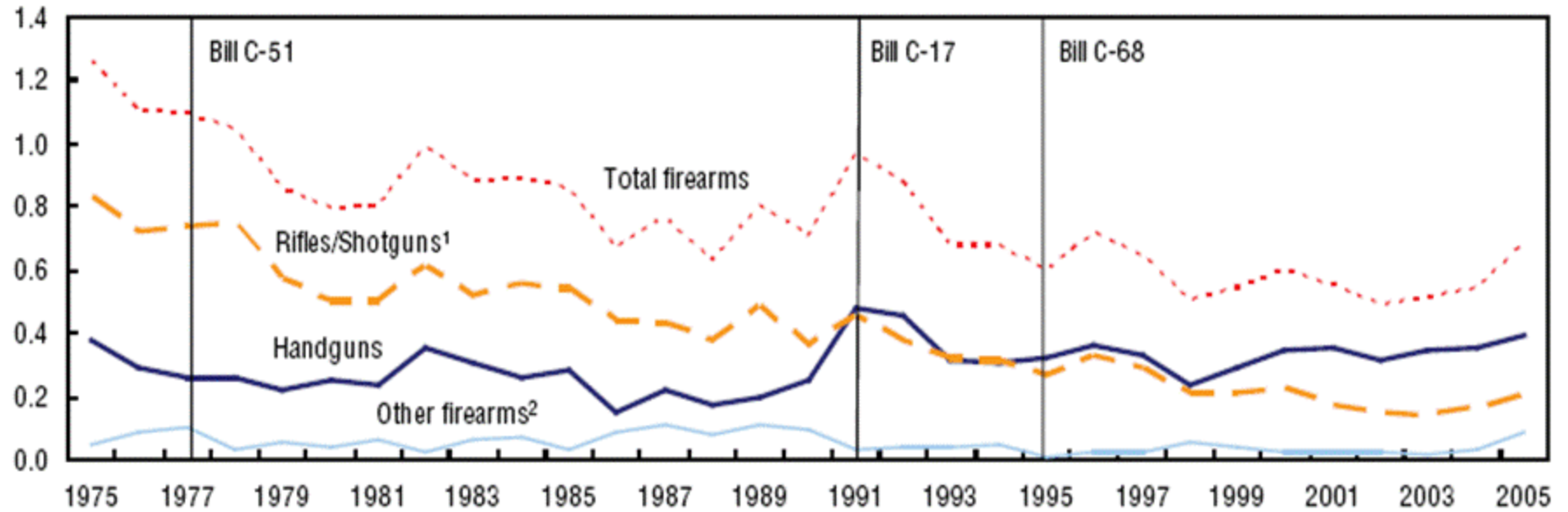
- **Quebec** - Overall, long guns are the most commonly seized firearm in Quebec based on seizure statistics; however, handguns are the gun of choice when referring to members of criminal organizations.
- **Atlantic (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador)** - Long guns are the illegal gun of preference throughout the Atlantic provinces, with the exception of urban areas (Halifax and Saint John) where handguns are more prevalent.

# Homicide in Canada, 2005

## Statistics Canada, Juristat

**Rate of firearm homicides, Canada, 1975 to 2005**

Rate per 100,000 population



1. Includes sawed-off rifles/shotguns.

2. Includes firearm-like weapons (e.g. nail gun, pellet gun) and unknown type of firearm.

**Note:** The information is not intended to imply a causal relationship between gun-control legislation and homicide rates. See Firearm Legislation textbox for details of Bills.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

The above table shows the firearm-related homicide rate between 1974 and 2005 indicating where legislative changes have been enacted. The information is not intended to imply a causal relationship between gun control legislation and homicide rates.

The following page provides a summary of related Firearm Legislation.

## Homicide in Canada, 2005

### Statistics Canada, Juristat

#### Firearm Legislation

**Firearm licensing and registration in Canada originated in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.** In 1892, the first firearm laws were introduced requiring owners of pistols to carry a certificate of exemption. In 1919 and 1920, it became a criminal offence for anyone to purchase a firearm without first having a firearms permit. **In 1934, a centralized registry was established** which required all handguns to be registered and in 1951 automatic firearms were added to the category of firearms to be registered.

**In 1969 Parliament enacted Bill C-150** and amended the *Criminal Code* which for the first time made it illegal to provide firearms to persons of “unsound mind” or criminals under prohibition orders....

**In 1977 Parliament enacted Bill C-51** and amended the *Criminal Code* requiring individuals to obtain a firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC). The legislation also introduced a variety of provisions including regulations on safe storage and display of firearms for businesses and bona-fide gun collectors. Mandatory minimum sentences to deter the criminal use of firearms were also introduced.

**In 1991 Parliament strengthened the screening provisions for FAC applicants by introducing new legislation (Bill C-17)....**

**In 1995 Parliament passed Bill C-68** which created a scheme to control the acquisition, possession, use, transfer, manufacture, distribution, import and export of all types of weapons, but principally firearms and ammunition. **Universal licensing** came into effect on January 1, 2003 **all firearms** (including non-registered rifles and shotguns) **had to be registered.** In addition, strict new penalties for the trafficking and smuggling of firearms and tougher mandatory minimum sentences for serious offences involving firearms were created.

## **Homicide in Canada, 2007**

### **Statistics Canada, Juristat**

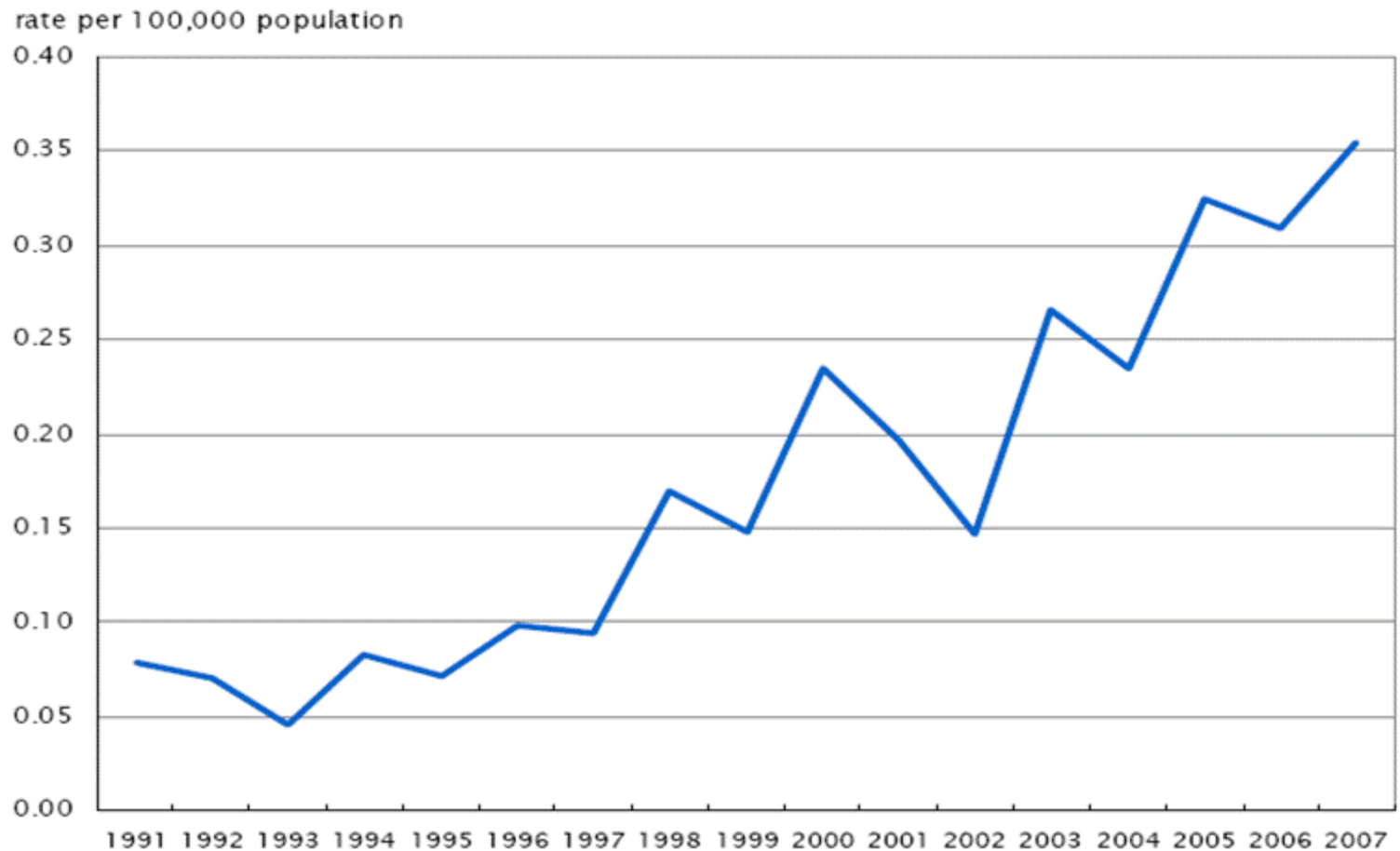
#### **Gang –related homicides on the increase**

- **Firearms were used more often in gang homicides than in other types of murder.** In 2007, 69% of gang-related homicides were committed with a firearm, compared to about 20% of homicides which did not involve gangs. In total, 43% of all homicides committed with a firearm in 2007 were gang-related.
- **Most gang-related homicides occurred within Canada's largest cities.** The nine largest metropolitan areas accounted for about 60% of Canada's homicides in 2007, but for more than three-quarters (3/4) of all gang homicides.

# Homicide in Canada, 2007

## Statistics Canada, Juristat

Chart 6 Gang-related homicides on the increase



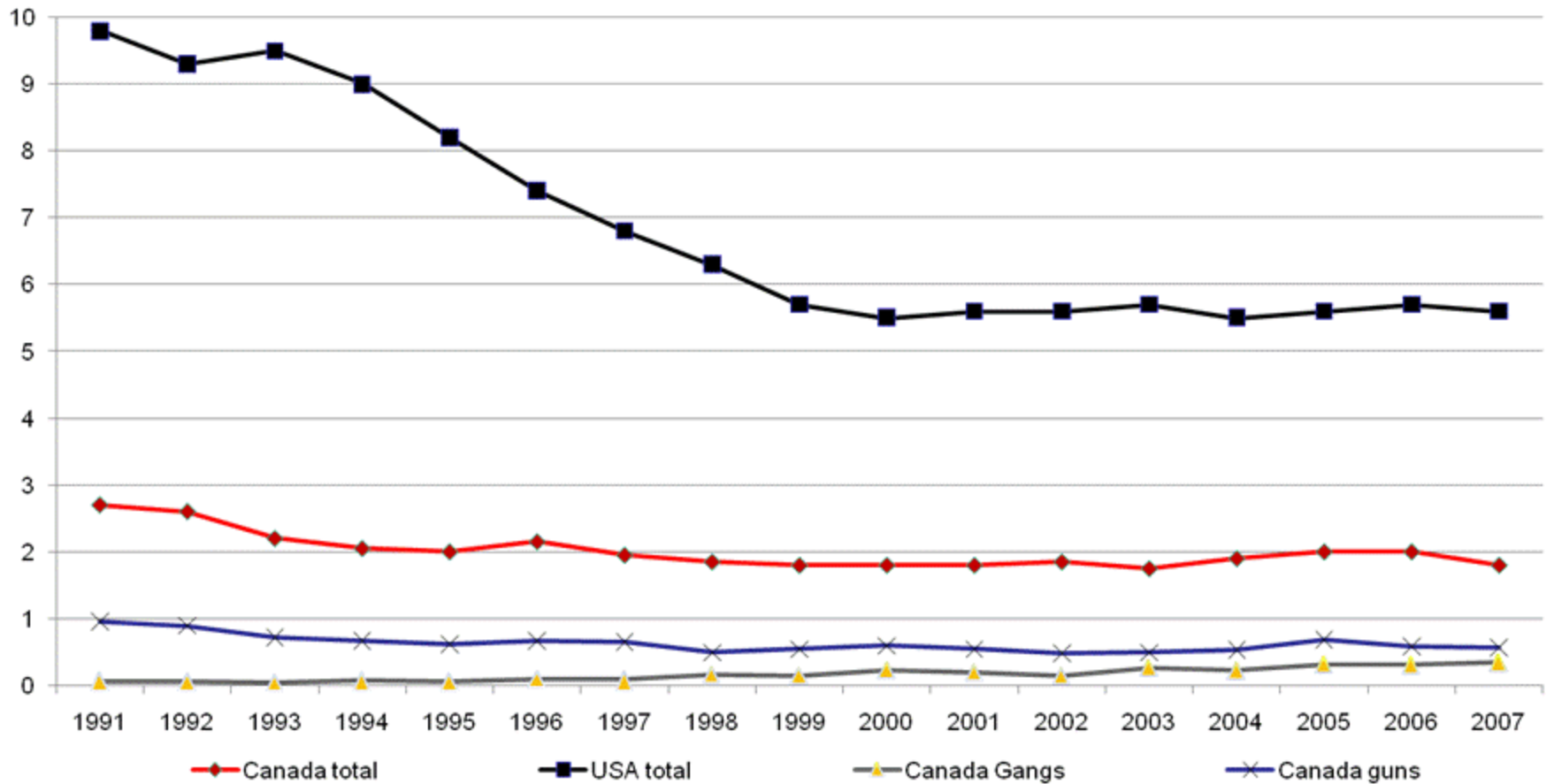
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

# Homicide in Canada, 2007

Total gang related homicides vs. Canadian homicides vs. Canadian gun homicides vs. total USA homicides

Source: Statistics Canada  
US data from FBI 2007 report

rate per 100,000 population





## Statistics Canada

### Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

**Firearm-related and gang-related homicides, 1993-2007**

Year	Total Homicides	Total gang-related homicides	Total gang-related and firearm-related homicides	% of gang-related homicides that involved firearms	% of non-gang-related homicides that involved firearms	Total non-gang-related	Unknown gang-related	Total non-gang firearm-related
1993	627	13	8	61.5	28.4	570	44	162
1994	596	24	18	75.0	29.6	531	41	157
1995	588	21	12	57.1	27.7	519	48	144
1996	635	29	17	58.6	30.9	550	56	170
1997	586	28	18	64.3	28.0	504	54	141
1998	558	51	40	78.4	19.7	467	40	92
1999	538	45	33	73.3	24.5	441	52	108
2000	546	72	59	81.9	23.8	428	46	102
2001	553	61	46	75.4	23.8	463	29	110
2002	582	46	28	60.9	20.5	492	44	101
2003	549	84	60	71.4	18.4	412	53	76
2004	624	75	54	72.0	20.0	505	44	101
2005	663	105	72	68.6	22.5	484	74	109
2006	606	101	75	74.3	20.9	454	51	95
2007	594	117	81	69.2	20.2	431	46	87

**Note:** Previous to 2005, police were asked if the homicide was "gang-related". Beginning 2005, the question was amended to give police the option of specifying whether the homicide was: (a) confirmed as gang-related or (b) "suspected" as being gang-related. While it is unknown if "suspected" gang-related incidents were included in these numbers prior to 2005, indications from police officers are that they would have been in the majority of cases.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

## **Homicide in Canada, 2007**

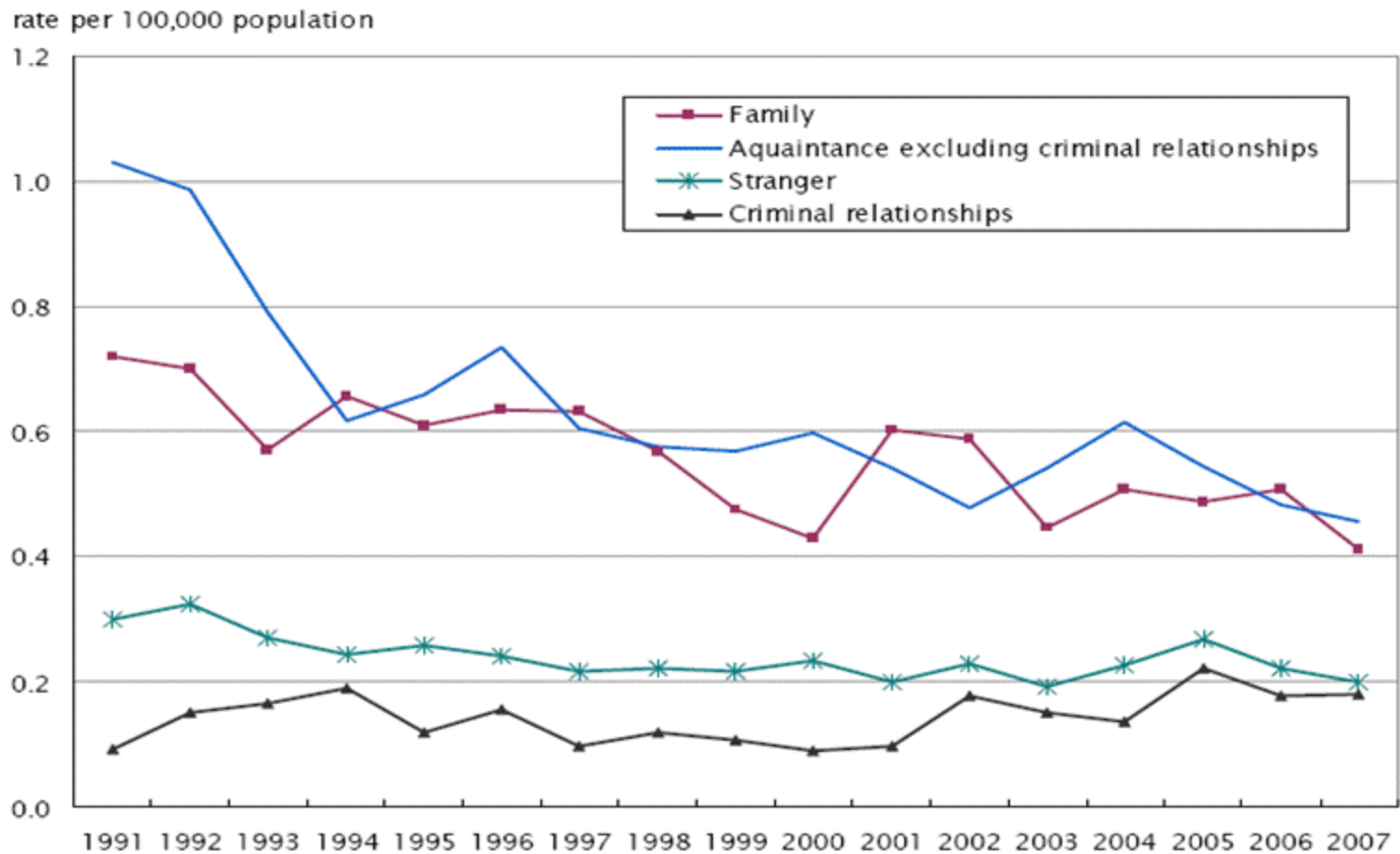
### **Statistics Canada, Juristat**

- **Most homicide victims know their killer.** In 2007, 84% of solved homicides were committed by someone known to the victim, most often a family member or an acquaintance.
- **Although the spousal homicide rate fell 18% in 2007, spousal homicides continue to account for just under half of the homicides committed by family members.**
- **After peaking in 2006, the number of youth accused of committing homicide decreased from 85 to 74 in 2007. However, the 2007 rate of youth accused of committing homicide was the second highest since 1961.**

# Homicide in Canada, 2007

## Statistics Canada, Juristat

Chart 7 Most homicides committed by someone known to victim



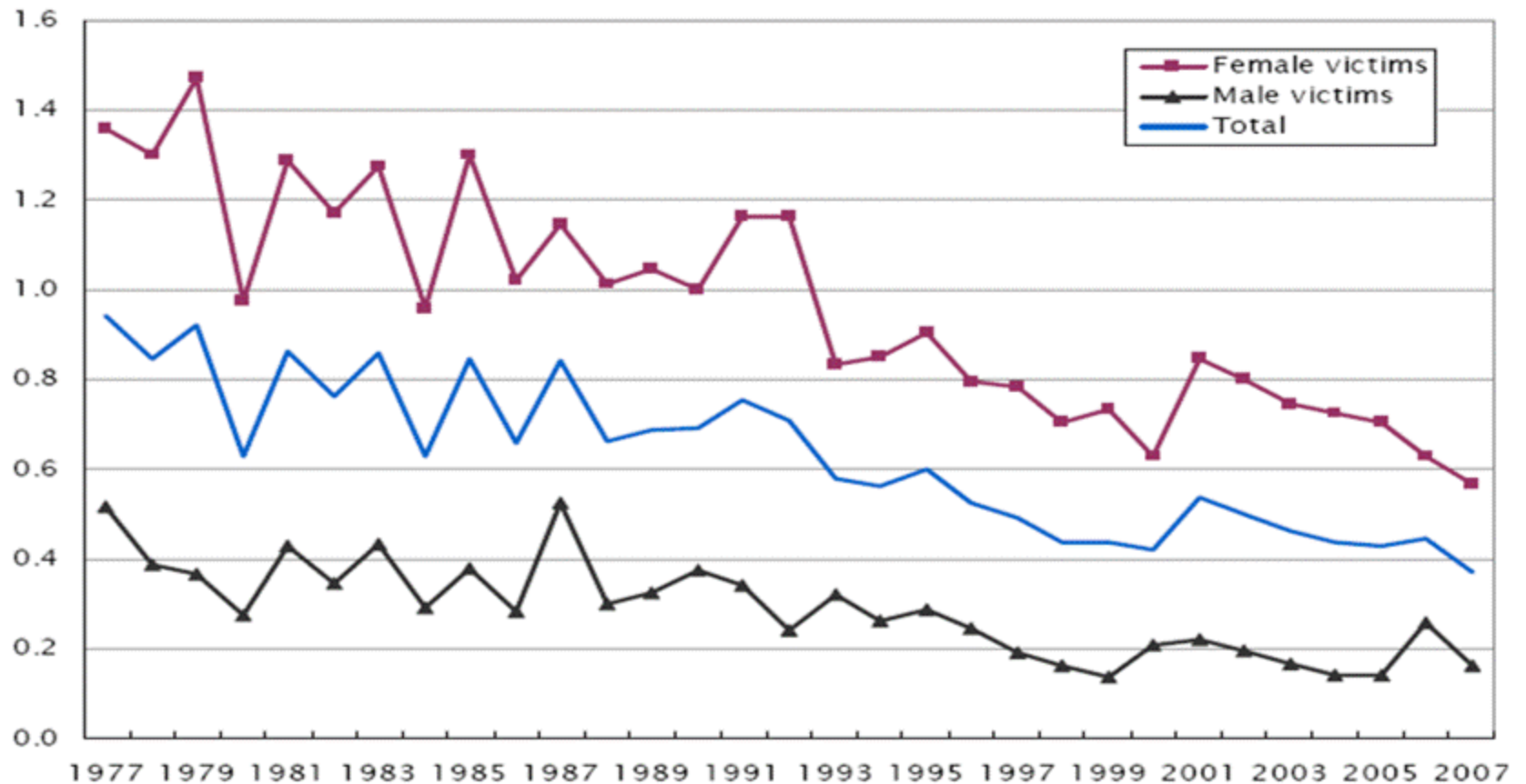
Note: Criminal relationship data unavailable prior to 1991.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

# Homicide in Canada, 2007

## Statistics Canada, Juristat

Spousal homicide rate  
rate per 100,000 spouses



Notes: Spouses include legally married, common-law, separated, and divorced persons age 15 years or older. Excludes same-sex spouses due to the unavailability of Census data on same-sex couples.  
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

## Statistics Canada Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

### Victims of Spousal Homicide Committed with Firearm by type of Firearm, Canada

Year	Handgun	Rifle Shotgun	Other firearms	Total firearms	% Male Victims	% Female Victims
2007	1	6	2	9	0.0	100.0
2006	4	9	3	16	18.8	81.3
2005	4	14	3	21	4.8	95.2
2004	7	7	2	16	6.3	93.8
2003	7	12	4	23	8.7	91.3
2002	5	10	1	16	12.5	87.5
2001	6	12	1	19	5.3	94.7
2000	8	12	0	20	20	80.0
1999	5	17	1	23	4.3	95.7
1998	3	12	4	19	10.5	89.5
1997	8	17	2	27	14.8	85.2
1996	4	20	3	27	14.8	85.2

1. Spousal homicides are those that involve persons in legal marriages, those who are separated or divorced from such unions and those in common-law relationships (including same-sex spouses)

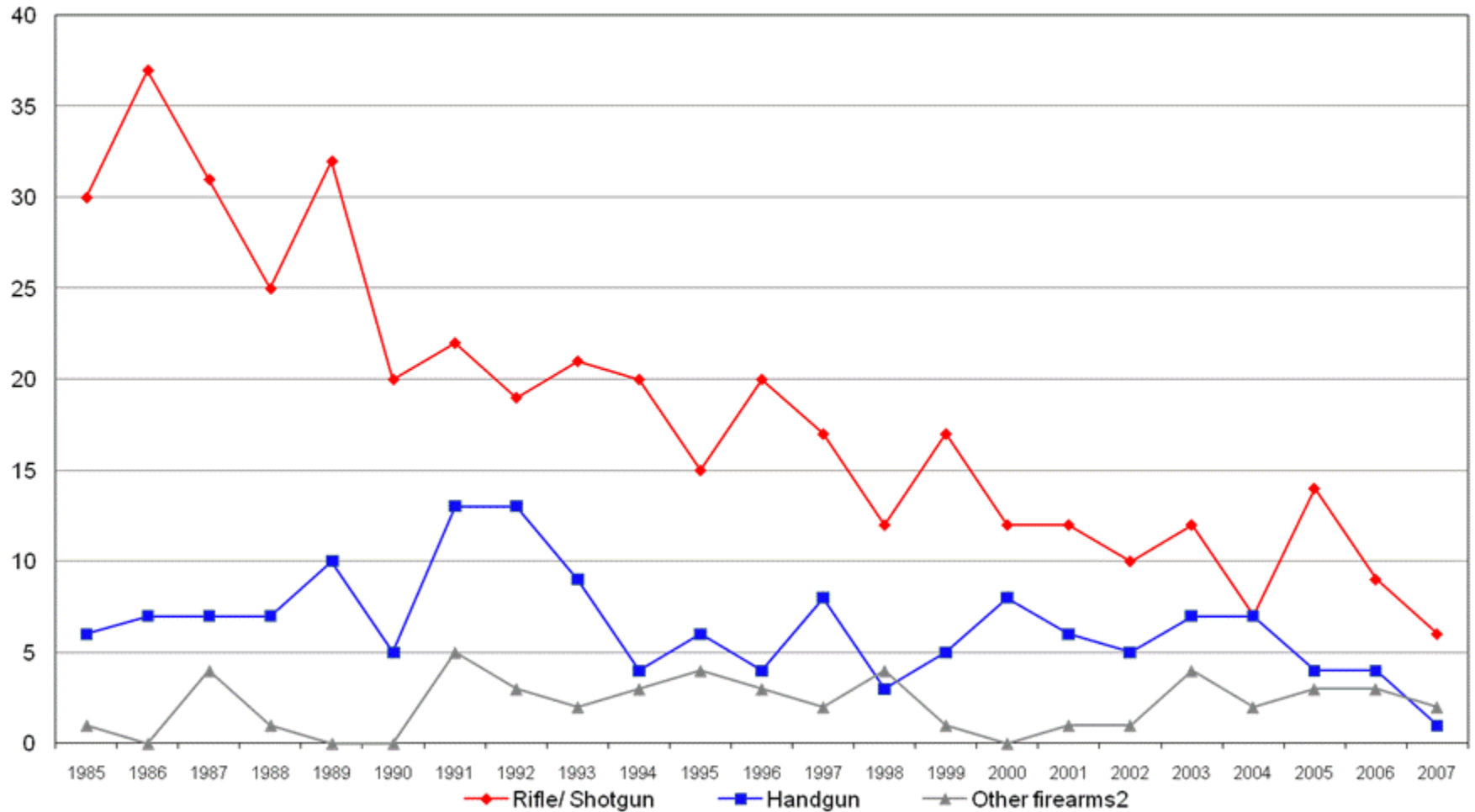
2. Other firearms include sawed-off rifle/shotguns, fully automatic weapons, firearm like weapons (ie nail-gun, pellet gun, etc) and firearms of unknown type.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey

# Statistics Canada Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

## Victims of spousal firearms-related homicides

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey



## Appendix A

Federal Partners Involved in the Administration of the CFP having Direct Costs Reimbursed by the CFP: [Canada Border Services Agency](#) (CBSA) — CBSA is responsible for administering elements of the CFP at Canada's border crossings. These elements of the Firearms Program are funded through Memoranda of Understanding with CBSA. This involves assessing and confirming non-resident firearm declarations and collecting the applicable fees, consistent with the provisions of the *Firearms Act* and other relevant legislation; determining the classification of the firearms; establishing the destination and purpose for importing the firearms; assessing the eligibility of the importer; and ensuring that all firearms are being transported safely and in accordance with the law.

[Department of Justice Canada](#) (DOJ) — DOJ provides legal advice, drafting and litigation services to the CFP whereas the Minister of Justice has the responsibility for the [Criminal Code of Canada, including Part III](#) (*Firearms and Other Weapons*).

Federal Partners Not Involved in the Day to Day Administration of the CFP Reporting Indirect Costs: [Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada](#) (PSEPC) — The CFP and PSEPC work together closely to ensure the Minister, parliamentarians and senior government officials have the information necessary to carry out their responsibilities.

**Department of [Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada](#)** (DFAIT)

***Foreign Affairs Canada*** — The Canada Firearms Centre works with Foreign Affairs Canada to ensure that Canada's international commitments regarding firearms reflect domestic Canadian priorities as well as Canada's capacity to implement them.

***International Trade Canada*** — The Canada Firearms Centre works with International Trade Canada to ensure that importers are aware of their obligations under the *Firearms Act*. International Trade Canada issues permits required to export and import firearms under the *Export and Import Permits Act*.

**Provinces and Territories** — Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia have appointed their own Chief Firearms Officers (CFOs) under the *Firearms Act*. The Government of Canada funds these operations through contribution agreements between the provinces and the Federal Government. The CFO responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador and the CFOs responsible for Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are appointed federally.

## Appendix B

### The Firearms Funding Program (for Opt-in Provinces)

The provincial jurisdictions that are currently administering the licensing elements of the CFP on their own (i.e., are an “opt-in” jurisdiction) include Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Ontario, and Quebec. These provinces are funded by the federal government in accordance with contribution agreements entered into with CFP. The contribution agreement is the vehicle through which the “opt-in” provinces receive funding and certain services and functions from the Government of Canada. Both the agreement and, in particular, the Service Delivery Model (SDM) help to ensure provincial consistency in the services provided via the Firearms Funding Program.

The contribution agreement stipulates that the total contribution to a province is calculated based on: a) agreed-to administrative costs<sup>78</sup>; and b) the payment for costs associated with delivery of services defined within the SDM, based on the actual product volumes (i.e., an activity based costing methodology). Any costs that “opt-in” provinces incur ‘outside’ of the Agreement that have not been agreed to by the CFP, are to be borne by the province. Table 1 outlines contribution payments made to opt-in provinces since 1998-1999.

Table 1

Canada Firearms Centre: Contribution Payments 1998-99 to 2006-07 (\$ in thousands)										
Province	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total
British Columbia	\$2,400	\$5,729	\$8,404	\$6,212	\$171	--	--	--	--	\$22,916

<sup>78</sup> This includes: a) the salary, wages, benefits and related administrative expenses incurred in respect of the CFO; b) the salary, wages, benefits and related administrative expenses incurred in respect of the staff of the office of the CFO; c) expenses incurred in respect to accommodation, furniture and equipment or other costs associated with the ongoing operations of the office of the CFO and staff in relation to the administration of the *Firearms Act*; and d) expenses incurred in respect to agreements established between the CFO and third parties such as regional/municipal police forces, other government departments/ministries as well as selected individuals identified to undertake work in the capacity of a Firearms Officer or on behalf of the CFO (NB: all such expenses are subject to the approval of the CFP).



RCMP, Canadian Firearms Program Evaluation, Final Approved Report, February 2010

Ontario	\$4,220	\$6,586	\$9,974	\$8,465	\$4,860	\$4,900	\$4,900	\$4,815	\$5,350	\$54,069
Quebec	\$4,223	\$8,194	\$15,220	\$17,535	\$9,574	\$8,600	\$5,831	\$4,600	\$5,100	\$78,877
New Brunswick	\$620	\$934	\$1,135	\$1,069	\$1,000	\$930	\$835	\$817	\$900	\$8,241
Nova Scotia	\$578	\$658	\$1,010	\$1,035	\$806	\$800	\$700	\$770	\$800	\$7,158
Prince Edward Island	\$54	\$170	\$222	\$224	\$204	\$200	\$185	\$149	\$205	\$1,613
Newfoundland	\$425	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$425
Yukon	\$85	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$85
<i>Total Contributions</i>	<i>\$12,606</i>	<i>\$22,271</i>	<i>\$35,965</i>	<i>\$34,540</i>	<i>\$16,615</i>	<i>\$15,430</i>	<i>\$12,451</i>	<i>\$11,151</i>	<i>\$12,355</i>	<i>\$173,384</i>

Note: Due to rounding, figures may not add to totals shown.

## Appendix C

### Additional Registry examples

After an individual was observed driving directly into some parked vehicles, he was taken into an ambulance to be checked out. He subsequently pulled out a handgun, pointed it at the attendants and threatened to kill them if they touched him. He then exited the ambulance and fled on foot. The local police soon apprehended him and found that he was in possession of a Glock pistol and loaded spare magazines. Canadian Firearms Registration online (CFRO) checks indicated that he was a licensed owner of 31 registered firearms. NWEST was asked to assist by preparing the public safety warrant, laying charges and seizing 33 firearms (two of which were not registered), along with thousands of rounds of ammunition.

NWEST provided (registry) support to the Municipal Police Agency on Vancouver Island, BC by conducting checks to determine the license and firearms status of a subject that had barricaded himself inside his residence. CFIS checks determined that subject had a valid firearms license with 4 long guns registered to him. This information was relayed to investigators on scene outside subject's residence. The knowledge that this individual had access to potentially 4 long barreled firearms impacted significantly on officer safety issues as to how the scene was handled. Police subsequently entered the residence and determined that subject had committed suicide by firearm. Five (5) firearms were recovered inside the residence, 4 registered to the deceased and 1 registered to a relative of the deceased.

Provided support to City Police Agency in Alberta with a residential break and enter case where an unknown number of registered firearms were stolen. Firearms owner was out of country on an extended vacation and caretaker of the residence was unable to determine what firearms were missing. NWEST checked CFRO which identified that owner had 5 firearms currently registered, two of which were accounted for at the residence. CFRO information allowed investigators to confirm what firearms were missing and enter them on CPIC as 'stolen'.

Gander, Newfoundland - Information from a concerned citizen indicated a web page where young males were posing with numerous firearms (handguns and long guns) while at the same time drinking and partying. From comments made on the site it was determined the residence was in Gander, NL. Local law enforcement was able to identify one of the males noted in the web page as well as his residence. The firearm Registry was able to confirm that a male living at that residence, believed to be the father, had a collection of restricted, prohibited and non-restricted firearms, twenty in all. A check of these firearms provided by the registry confirmed they were the same type noted in the photos on the WebPages. RCMP officers were able to obtain and successfully execute a Public Safety Search Warrant and seize all 19 firearms.

Provide support to RCMP Detachment in Alberta after a suspect was stopped with 4 long guns in his vehicle. The suspect was evasive when questioned about the firearms leading investigators to believe that they had been stolen. NWEST conducted CFRO checks on the recovered firearms and determined that all 4 were registered to a local resident other than the person that was in possession of them. The registered owner, who was working out of town, was contacted by police and stated that as far as he was aware all of his firearms were safely stored at his residence. Police attended owners' residence and discovered evidence confirming that his residence had been broken into and that all 16 of his long guns had been stolen. Investigational follow up subsequently resulted in the recovery of the remaining 12 long guns from the suspect.

#### Psychiatrist working in a rural area

April 2007 letter to CFP – I am writing in response to the Order Amending the Order Declaring an Amnesty Period (2006). I think this order should not be extended and should run out as of May 16, 2007. As a psychiatrist working in a rural area, I see the impact of access to guns all too frequently. I also make use of the registry on an intermittent basis and think that it has been helpful in preventing tragedies in my area. Prior to the strengthening of the gun control legislation, it was very difficult to get someone's guns taken away when they became mentally ill. No one knew whether people had guns nor did they know how many guns they had. There was virtually no way to prevent someone with mental illness from getting a gun. There was no clear mechanism to remove guns and the police were often unsure as to how to proceed when I would phone them. Different detachments would give different answers about what to do. The situation now is much more satisfactory. If there is a concern about someone having guns, or significantly, about them getting guns, not only the police but also the public, are clear about the system.

To give you an example of how the registry is used in practice, I will cite an example that happened a few years ago. The wife of one of the local pastors showed up at the mental health centre upset about a letter her husband had received. The letter was rambling and somewhat psychotic one with no obvious threats. However, the man had been known to be mentally unstable and violent towards his family. The letter frightened the people who received it and they wondered whether they were at risk. The first question I asked was whether they knew if he had a gun. Of course, they didn't so they were advised to contact the RCMP to explain the circumstances and have them find out if he had a gun through the registry. If he was found to have a gun, the police would have grounds to go out and investigate, something I think they would have had difficulty doing in the past without clear threat. If the RCMP went out and found unregistered firearms, they would have grounds to remove them because of the legislation, whereas they probably would not have had grounds to do so in the past.

I regularly get calls from a variety of people asking me if I can comment on the level of risk a person poses given their behavior. Usually, one of the first things I want to know is if they have a gun. An unstable person with a gun is far riskier than one without. In the past, there was no way the police could check whether someone had a gun or not. While obviously not all guns are registered yet, the existence of the registry allows another means to help determine someone's risk. I know of examples where the police removed guns from a local man who was depressed and another where the legislation prevented a psychotic woman with no past history of mental illness or criminal activity from obtaining guns. Both of these scenarios could easily have been tragedies involving several people, primarily their family members, had there not been mechanisms in place to deal with these situations. Unfortunately, none of these preventative activities makes the newspaper so people are not aware of how useful it is in practice. Had this type of system been in place in Virginia, it could very well have prevented the tragedy that just occurred there.

Licensing of owners and registration of guns are key elements of effective gun control. Effective gun control can help to reduce and contain violence, as numerous studies and statistics show. The fact that guns have to be registered and owners licensed does not mean that gun owners are criminals or that their guns are going to be confiscated. It does not mean that there is a conspiracy against hunting. It means that people who act in a safe manner with legal guns can hunt and sport shoot just as they have always done, albeit the inconvenience of having to be licensed and having their guns registered. They are contributing to a safer society by complying with registration and licensing, as most Canadians who own guns have done. Police use the registry regularly and in a routine manner which enhances their safety and the safety of others. Allowing this amnesty reduces the effectiveness of the registry and diminishes the safety factor associated with the registry. The ability to trace weapons used in crime is vital in securing prosecution of those involved with unsafe or criminal use of guns. Canada has firearms legislation that seems to be working. It is the envy of many nations. It has some teeth, which is why it is working. Canada is one of the safest places to live on the planet. Please keep public safety the number one priority among the competing interests. Let this amnesty order die.

## Appendix D

### Domestic Violence and access to firearms

Prohibit domestic abusers from owning guns: lawyer Justice Hampton attorney says it should be policy for Crown to request and be granted ban: Published Friday July 27th, 2007

**FREDERICTON - Anyone convicted in a domestic violence case should be banned from accessing guns, says a New Brunswick lawyer. David Lutz, who practices family and criminal law in Hampton, said it should be public policy for prosecutors to ask and be granted a ban on domestic abusers from owning or possessing firearms. "Anyone who is ever convicted of a domestic assault should not be allowed to have a gun ever again," Lutz said. "At least for a substantial period of time. I would say a minimum of 10 years." Right now, it's up to prosecutors to decide whether to ask a judge to order a firearms ban, sometimes on the recommendation of the RCMP.**

The call for a policy change comes days after James McCurdy, 50, shot his common-law wife **Karen Buchanan**, 45, in their **Oak Bay** home before turning the shotgun on himself. During their 10- to 12-year abusive relationship, McCurdy was convicted of assaulting **Buchanan** twice (once in 2001 and again in 2002). He faced charges of assault and uttering threats in February, 2006, but the assault charge was dropped. The prosecutor's office said he was never prohibited from owning a weapon. The RCMP noted none of the charges were weapons-related. Lutz said in cases such as this, guns should be taken away before the situation escalates to murder. He said domestic violence deaths almost always progress from less-serious threats and assaults. "You could not get more typical than this (case) in terms of escalation," Lutz said. Lutz said if there was a policy of banning gun possession and ownership, there would be a reduction in domestic violence cases and murders.

According to one study, 13 of 28 domestic violence deaths in New Brunswick between 1985 and 2005 were committed with a firearm. Jackie Matthews, the Charlotte County representative for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, agrees convicted domestic abusers should have their guns taken away. "If you've got a violent temper and got a history of abuse, then to me it's a no-brainer," Matthews said. Valerie Kilfoil, a Justice Department spokeswoman, said the domestic violence committee - which falls under the Crown Prosecutor's Office - discussed establishing a policy mandating prosecutors to seek a firearms ban in every domestic abuse case. "Right now they feel the system is working fine the way it is "there's no plans, at this time to change it," Kilfoil said.

RCMP spokesman Cpl. Gilles Blinn said if police officers have reasonable and probable grounds to believe a person is violent and could harm someone, they will request a ban on that person from owning or possessing firearms. But, he said, police officers weigh the level of the threat to someone's safety in each case. Blinn said unfortunately a ban on firearms wouldn't necessarily have stopped McCurdy from killing **Buchanan**. "What's to stop him from killing someone with a hammer or a knife?" he said. "If someone really wants to kill their spouse, they're going to do it." However, researcher Deborah Doherty said access to guns greatly escalates the risk of someone being killed in violent homes. "It's a lot harder to strangle somebody or to kill them with a knife than on the spur of the moment" pull the trigger," said Doherty, who is the executive director of the Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick.

In a report Doherty recently sent to the Canada Firearms Centre 68 of 391 women surveyed who used transition houses or victim services in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island said there were firearms in the home. Of those 68, 43 said they were more fearful for their own safety and that their ability to seek help was affected by the presence of a gun. Debrah Westerburg, director of Woodstock Sanctuary House, said a woman's fear for her safety is definitely a factor in her decision to leave an abusive relationship. Lutz said he understands owning firearms is a right many people defend. "However, when you beat up your spouse, you lose your right."

### **GUNS INCREASE RISK OF SPOUSAL HOMICIDE**

This is the newly revised list of **New** Brunswickers killed in the last dozen years in the context of a violent relationship. Karen, Simonne, Andrée, Monique, Denise, Dale, Alice, Maria, Gail, Valerie, Shaila, Joséphine, Andrew, Lukas, Karen, Elery, Diane, Nicholas, Theresa, Catherine, Heather, Carole, Colette, Norma, Micheline, Françoise, Monique, Sophia, Pamela, Sandra, Colette, Carmel, Florence, Dorothy, Michèle, Albertine, Ginette, Darlene, Raymonde, Karine, Shirley, Pamela, Stella, Brenda, Rhonda, Sara, Diane, Patti-Jo, Elda, Paula, Rachel.

Most of them were spouses or former spouses, but some of them were children or friends also killed when the violent partner came looking for his victim. In some cases, the violent partner also killed himself: Jimmy, Nicholas, Paul, Robert, Dany, Georges, Hubert, Robert, Jules, Henry, Mario, Claude.

That we will never stop all such deaths is certain. What is also certain is that we could prevent some of them: if persons convicted of threats or assault against a partner were banned from owning a firearm. If we conducted domestic death reviews - giving hindsight a chance to give insights into preventing future deaths. If we invested in a public information campaign to prevent domestic violence. If we did more to assist friends, neighbours, co-workers and communities to know when and how to intervene. If we ensured that court sentences were appropriate and conditions attached to sentences were followed.

Last week in **Oak Bay**, a man with a history of spousal assault convictions, and known to have used a firearm to threaten his spouse, shot her and then himself, adding to **New Brunswick**'s high rate of spousal murder-suicides and high rate of deaths by firearm. The suggestion that persons convicted of spousal violence be banned from owning a firearm is controversial for some, but a no-brainer for many people. As this newspaper's editorial said last week, "something must be done to get legally owned guns out of the hands of those at risk of committing murder or suicide". Removing the firearm does not stop the violence, but the risk of someone being killed is greatly increased when there is a firearm in the home. In some instances of domestic homicide, the perpetrator attacks the victim with the intention of killing her. In other instances, it is not clear whether he aimed to kill her or whether her death resulted from an incident of domestic violence that escalated. Instances of the latter variety can potentially be prevented by keeping firearms out of the hands of perpetrators of domestic violence.

As researcher Deborah Doherty said last week, when police are called to a domestic violence incident, they have the authority to search for and seize firearms, but they don't always do it in **New Brunswick**. Prosecutors could also ask the judge in such cases to issue a ban on owning firearms, but they don't always do it. Doherty found that a firearm was used in 13 of 28 **New Brunswick** domestic homicides that she studied. A firearm was used in all but one of the homicide-suicides cases studied. In another study of about 400 women who used transition house or victim services in **New Brunswick** and Prince Edward Island, Doherty and a partner found that the presence of a gun made most of the women in that situation afraid to seek help. It is interesting to note that domestic homicides in the province are disproportionately common in rural areas, likely related to the presence of hunting guns in more rural than urban homes. Also interesting is that most murder-suicides occur in a rural area of the province. Other factors at play in rural areas are isolation, reduced access to services and slower police response times. **New Brunswick** has done much to help domestic violence victims in the last decade.

Last week's announcement after the **Oak Bay murder-suicide**, that the Minister of Public Safety will recommend to the provincial cabinet the establishment of a domestic violence review committee is welcome news. In Ontario and in several jurisdictions in other countries where such reviews are conducted, they have been useful to identify **new** ways of intervening in high-risk cases in order to prevent other deaths in the future.

Now that the Public Safety Minister has promised action on domestic death reviews, the issue becomes how quickly this committee will be set to work and when we will benefit from its first recommendations, since every few months, another victim is added to the list. This committee is especially important in cases of **murder-suicide** since those cases are closed rather quickly. No investigation or trial keeps them in the media beyond a few days and what we might have learned from the tragedy is lost. **New Brunswick** has a higher rate of spousal murder-suicides than the Canadian average.

In the end, domestic homicides can best be prevented by preventing domestic violence generally. What must be tackled is the work of changing our culture so that violence is abhorrent, so that men will not feel the entitlement that allows them to resort to violence to control their partner, so that we all feel a responsibility to end violence. *Ginette Petitpas-Taylor of Moncton is Chairperson of the **New Brunswick** Advisory Council on the Status of Women. She may be reached via e-mail at [acsnwccf@gnb.ca](mailto:acsnwccf@gnb.ca)*



## Appendix E

### Op-ed Submission to the Globe and Mail April 7, 2009 (Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police)

#### **Safety at Risk if Gun Control Dismantled** **Gun control saves lives.**

For the past forty years the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACCP) has been at the forefront pressing for strong firearms control measures. Canada's police leaders have adopted twenty-five resolutions on firearms control, including support for the *Firearms Act* and registration of all firearms, in the interests of public and officer safety.

Where do guns come from? Every illegal gun was once legal. Handguns and assault weapons smuggled in from the United States certainly are part of the problem. We have seen escalating gun violence among rival gangs and the devastating results when legal guns are diverted to illegal markets and unlicensed users.

We need to be able to track firearms to enforce laws and combat the illegal gun trade in cooperation with other nations. Without the registry, Canadian police will no longer be able to trace unrestricted firearms and will become dependent upon police in other jurisdictions to establish the source of firearms and lay the evidentiary trail needed for prosecutions. This would undermine Canada's compliance with international agreements and facilitate the illegal importation of firearms.

The BC government commissioned "A Report on the Illegal Movement of Firearms in British Columbia". The 2008 report revealed that a substantial number of firearms recovered in crime were once legally owned in Canada. The report documents legal dealers importing guns legally and selling them illegally, and legal gun owners providing guns to unlicensed owners. It also highlights the problem of stolen guns, which by definition are in the hands of criminals.

The report also underscores that rifles and shotguns account for a substantial proportion of crime guns seized. Recently police in Surrey seized over 200 rifles and shotguns. In Toronto a significant number of crime guns seized were once legally owned rifles or shotguns. Rifles and shotguns, many legally owned, are the weapons of choice in domestic violence, in suicide and in the murders of police officers in Canada.

Regrettably, no law or system is 100% foolproof. However, ensuring that all gun owners are screened and licenses regularly renewed reduces the risk that people who are a threat to themselves or others will have access to firearms. And the current computer-based system, which provides regular alerts if licensed gun owners come into conflict with the law, is not the only control mechanism in place. Screening processes are designed to identify risk factors not known to police and to keep information in the database current.

Registration of firearms is essential to the licensing process. When gun owners are held accountable for their firearms, they are less likely to sell or give them to unlicensed individuals. Registration assists police in knowing what firearms to look for when enforcing prohibition orders. Information about registered firearms found at the scene of a crime supports criminal investigations and convictions.

The registry has been instrumental in removing guns from potentially dangerous people. Shortly after the Dawson College shooting, police found threats from another man. The registry confirmed that there were guns in his home and police removed them quickly. Police across Canada use the firearms registry nearly 10,000 times daily during investigations and for preventive action.

Yes, rifles and shotguns are used less frequently in crime today than fifteen years ago. Why? Inquests into several high profile shootings recommended their licensing and registration. It would seem that these measures have paid off. The rates of firearm murders (particularly of women), robberies, and suicides have all declined significantly with improvements to the legislation.

Rhetoric around the registry's cost obscures the reality that the money has been spent. To dismantle an effective system now would be a waste. The costs going forward are largely associated with licensing of firearm owners. In 2006 the RCMP testified that eliminating rifle and shotgun registration would save less than \$3 million a year, roughly the cost of a couple of complex murder investigations.

The bottom line is that all firearms are potentially lethal. Gun control is a necessary part of an integrated strategy to address violence. The CACP is proud of Canada's international reputation as a country with effective gun control legislation and strenuously opposes any weakening of Canada's current firearms control regime. Lives depend on it.

Sincerely,  
Deputy Director General Steven Chabot  
President, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

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## Appendix F

### Provincial and Territorial Interviews of Key Firearm Stakeholders

In October 2007 New Brunswick was the first province to be visited by members of RCMP Headquarters Evaluation, to conduct interviews on the Canadian Firearms Program. The team consisted of five (5) Evaluators including, the Director of Program Evaluation. There were five (5) groups identified. The interview questionnaires had slight differences, depending on the interviewees ability to respond to the questions ie. Opt-in funding question. Most questions were open ended to promote dialogue. Some questions were also scaled (1-10) with 1 being poor and 10 excellent. The interview format changed slightly after New Brunswick, by moving the Success questions to the beginning of the interview to allow more dialogue. Further interviews were conducted in the provinces of Ontario, British Columbia, Nunavut and Alberta. Final interviews were conducted in Ottawa with the Canadian Firearms Program and a number of other key stakeholders. Legend:

- A Senior Managers (i.e.: OIC, CFO, Senior Partners)
- B Managers (i.e.: Processing Center): Processing Centre; CFO's office
- C Government Agencies (Police Justice): Police; Government Agencies; Advisory Committee; Safety Instructors; Firearms Officers; Conservation/ Game Officers; Crown; NWEST; Guns & Gangs
- D Special Interest: Gun Clubs/ Ranges, Owners; Businesses; Aboriginal; Health; Victims Groups; Education
- E Frontline Staff

**Introduction: Group "A"**- *includes all of the questions – and the first page is the same for all interviewees*

You have been asked to participate today in an evaluation of the Canadian Firearms Program.

The evaluation of this program commenced in response to a recommendation from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Tenth Report, Dec 2006) and in accordance with the Treasury Board policy on Transfer Payments. Criteria included in the evaluation include: relevance, success, cost-effectiveness and implementation of the Canadian Firearms Program.

The evaluation scope is limited to direct costs incurred by the Canadian Firearms Center and RCMP partners in the administration of the Canadian Firearms Program. The administrative side of the Canadian Firearms Program relates primarily to firearm\*(1): licensing, registration, safety courses and interfaces with the law enforcement community.

It should be noted that the criminal enforcement component is separate from the Canadian Firearms Program and is not a direct subject of this evaluation.

This evaluation is being conducted by personnel from RCMP Evaluation, located at Ottawa Headquarters.

Your assistance in participating in the evaluative interview is very much appreciated.

Note: (1) 'firearms' refer to both long-guns and handguns.

**Interviewee Details:**

Name: Function/Role; Location; Other:

**Canadian Firearms Program (CFP) Interview Questions, Group “A”**

**Relevance**

During this interview we will be asked you a number of questions and we would like you to respond to them candidly. Following a number of these questions, will also ask you to provide a general performance rating for that issue. We will be using a ten point scale, with 1 representing poor and 10 representing excellent.

1. <sup>79</sup>(all) (skipped after NB) Is the CFP improving the capacity of government and non-government partners to address firearm crime and safety issues?

Using a ten point scale, with 1 representing poor and 10 representing excellent, how would you rate the CFPs performance in improving the capacity of government and non-government partners to address **(1) firearm crime** and **(2) safety issues**?

- |     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| (1) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| (2) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

(all) 2. Is there an ongoing need for the CFP?

(A, only) 3. Are CFP priorities, consistent with the RCMP and government-wide priorities?

(A) 4. Is there a need for the Opt-in Firearms Funding Program?

**Success**

1. (all) Has the CFP contributed to increased public safety?

Using a ten point scale, with 1 representing poor and 10 representing excellent, how would you rate the CFPs contribution to increased public safety?

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

(all) 2. Are CFP screening processes effective in restricting access to firearms, from ineligible businesses and individuals?

Using a ten point scale, with 1 representing poor and 10 representing excellent, how would you rate the CFPs screening processes as being effective in restricting access to firearms, from ineligible businesses and individuals?

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

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<sup>79</sup> Applicable groups given the question.

(all) 3. Does CFP safety training, contribute to the safe handling, use and storage of firearms?

Using a ten point scale, with 1 representing poor and 10 representing excellent, how would you rate the CFPs safety training, for contributing to the safe handling, use and storage of firearms?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

(all) 4. Is the CFP registration process for long-guns and handguns effective in restricting access to firearms from ineligible businesses and individuals?

Using a ten point scale, with 1 representing poor and 10 representing excellent, how would you rate the effectiveness of the CFPs registration process for **(1) long-guns** and **(2) handguns** in restricting access to firearms from ineligible businesses and individuals?

(1)      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

(2)      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

(all) 5. Are the CFP outreach and communication strategies, with government clients and the public, effective? In what way? (website, info bulletins, advertising)

Using a ten point scale, with 1 representing poor and 10 representing excellent, how would you rate the effectiveness of the CFPs outreach and communication strategies, with government clients and the public?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

(all) 6. Has the CFP improved the capacity of government and non-government partners to address firearm crime and safety issues?

Using a ten point scale, with 1 representing poor and 10 representing excellent, how would you rate CFPs performance in improving the capacity of government and non-government partners to address firearm crime and safety issues?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

(all) 7. Has there been increased use of CFP information by judicial and law enforcement partners?

(all) 8. Is the CFP providing timely accurate and useful information?

Using a ten point scale, with 1 representing poor and 10 representing excellent, how would you rate CFPs performance in providing **(1) timely (2) accurate and (3) useful information?**

(1)      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

(2)      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

(3)      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

(all/exceptE) 9. Have CFP partnerships been developed? Please explain (with whom/ to what extent)? Are these partnerships effective?

(all/except E) 10. Has the CAFC enabled Canada to meet its international obligations?

### **Cost-effectiveness**

(all) 1. Is the CFP cost effective?

Using a ten point scale, with 1 representing poor and 10 representing excellent, how would you rate CFPs cost effectiveness?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

(all) 2. Has the CAFC/ CFP leveraged other resources to achieve the desired results?

(A) 3. Is the Opt-In Firearms Funding Program cost-effective?

(A) 4. How do the planned costs compare with the actual costs of the Opt-In Firearms Funding Program?

### **Design and Delivery**

(all) 1. Are firearm owners and businesses satisfied with CFP service delivery?

Using a ten point scale, with 1 representing poor and 10 representing excellent, how would you rate firearm owners and businesses satisfaction with the CFP service delivery?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

(all) 2. Are existing resources reasonable for delivery of the CFP?

(all) 3. Is the CFP being delivered consistently across the provinces?

(A) 4. Are opt-in provinces satisfied with the CAFC's provision of federal components to support CFO service delivery?

### **Other Service Delivery Options**

(all) 1. Are there more cost-effective alternatives to the CFP?

(all) 2. Is the federal role appropriate? Is there duplication or overlap with provincial services?

(all) 3. Is the role of the opt-in provinces appropriate?

**Concluding remarks:**

(all) 1. Are there barriers to CFP effectiveness? If so, what are they? How can they be addressed?

(all) 2. Could you possibly recap, on the 2 or 3 issues you feel strongly about?

## **Appendix G**

## The Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line (CFRO)

The Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line (CFRO) system provides police officers access to firearms license and registration information in the Canadian Firearms Information System through an interface called the Canadian Police Information Centre. Police queried CFRO an average of 9,400 times per day in 2008. This rate is 44% higher than 2006, largely attributable to the RCMP's increased use of the system.

In early 2007, the Canadian Firearms Program undertook an initiative to assess the usefulness of CFRO to general duty police officers. The purpose was to gain an understanding of how CFRO could be improved to offer greater assistance to the policing community as well as to identify the need for additional training.

The survey was sent to 500 police contacts from a wide variety of agencies, encouraging distribution to as many general duty officers as possible. The CFP received responses between March and July, 2007. During this period, 408 police officers from 56 police departments completed the survey with a functional breakdown as follows; 262 general duty patrol officers, 64 criminal investigators and 82 supervisors. The responses fully reflect the diversity of police departments from large to small, urban to rural, federal, municipal and provincial. The survey consisted of questions focusing on the use of CFRO and the users' familiarity and training with the system.

### Key Findings

	Overall	Trained	Not trained	Difference
Does your agency use the CFRO system?	92%	98%	86%	12%
Do you use CFRO in your day to day functions?	65%	78%	53%	25%
I use CFRO in responding to calls for service	73%	81%	65%	16%
CFRO query results influence the manner in which I handle calls for service.	69%	73%	65%	8%
In my experience, CFRO query results have proven beneficial during major operations.	74%	81%	68%	13%



The results of the survey confirm that trained general duty police officers value the information from CFRO and it has a significant impact on their day to day functions especially on service calls that could involve violence or firearms.

Police policy may be to query CFRO in responding to particular types of calls for service, yet many agencies have not provided consistent formal training to equip officers in carrying out the policy nor how to interpret the results of the queries. The results of the survey indicate that many officers who use CFRO have never had training in how to use it. The results can be disastrous (see the article below). Even if an officer understands how to query they may not understand the results they receive thus leading to an inappropriate intervention.

Police departments have dramatically increased their use of CFRO now the challenge is to train police officers to use the results they receive to improve their own and public safety.

“CSST report on Tessier's death released  
Montreal Gazette

If the Laval police had properly verified the gun registry they could have avoided the tragic loss of one of their officers during a botched drug raid, says the provincial work health and safety commission.

The raid ended the life of Constable Daniel Tessier after Brossard resident Basil Parasiris opened fire on Laval police officers who stormed into his home in March 2007.

The CSST's report found that the Laval police drug squad did not do a thorough check of the gun registry before they entered the house. A check was only made on the address of the Brossard home they were about to enter. Had they run Parasiris's name in the gun registry they would have learned he had a gun registered to a previous address.

The mix up was revealed during Parasiris's jury trial earlier this year. But the CSST report goes further and reveals that if the drug squad suspected Parasiris had a firearm they would have asked for assistance from a better trained and better equipped unit within the police force.

Parasiris was acquitted by the jury after he testified that he believed he and his family were about to be the victims of a home invasion when the police stormed in. The trial also raised several questions about whether Tessier was easily identifiable as a police officer that morning.

Parasiris is scheduled to be sentenced on weapons charges early next year. That includes a charge of not having a firearm registered at the proper address.”

## Way Forward

The CFP has a mandate to develop a formal training program for CFRO, including assessment of options and content for training. CFP wishes to work with CPKN to develop a training tool targeted to all front-line police officers in Canada. Since CFRO is similar in nature to CPIC, we anticipate the course will be similar to the CPIC project that was undertaken in 2007.

As well, this project will build on the *Firearms Identification for Public Agents* (FIPA) project that is currently underway. Up to September 16<sup>th</sup>, 6542 participants have registered to the FIPA pilot. Of these, 946 have started the course and 492 have successfully completed the course with a passing score of 80% or higher. Based on survey results to date, the FIPA Pilot is an overwhelming success. Of all survey respondents, 93% indicated that they achieved their expected learning objectives with this course. Eighty-nine per cent (89%) responded that this course increased their knowledge and confidence when identifying firearms and improved their understanding of the Firearms Reference Table. Eighty-nine per cent (89%) of participants also indicated that they would recommend this course to their colleagues.

## Appendix H

### Rationale behind Firearm Licence Renewal Process

The *Firearms Act* requires that individuals must hold a valid firearms licence to possess or acquire firearms. In accordance with the *Firearms Act*, the licence must be renewed every five-years. The following reasons are the rationale behind the renewal requirement:

- the licence card acts as a form of identification when clients purchase firearms or ammunition. Photos must be updated to ensure accurate identification of licence holder to the seller of the firearm;
- updates are required to personal history (mental health) which are collected on the renewal application and are not normally accessible to the Firearms Program via external databases. The questions on the application form are directly linked to studies of domestic homicides and suicide involving firearms. A number of risk factors were determined in those studies: a history of violence, past substance abuse (drugs and alcohol), an existing criminal record, a separation or pending separation, depression, or employment and financial problems;
- marital status of firearm owners may have altered over the five years and it is imperative that spouses are aware of ownership and are provided with the opportunity to raise objections;
- reason (purpose) for possession of restricted and prohibited firearms are validated to ensure legal usage, as well as continual possession;
- provides an opportunity to ensure accuracy and currency of data, such as firearm location information, which is essential when police access the Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line (CFRO) to utilize the information for enforcement or investigative purposes; and
- renewal process provides increased accountability and awareness of responsibility to firearms owner, thereby promoting public safety

In order to ensure eligibility, initial screening against police and court data bases is performed on the applicant to ensure there are no documented safety concerns for the applicant to possess a firearm. Once a licence has been issued, background checks are ongoing through a process known as continuous eligibility. Daily checks of these police and court database are performed to determine if any new information (occurrence) is identified indicating that a licence holder may have become a public-safety risk. If concerns are identified, automatic notification is provided to the appropriate Chief Firearms Officer.

The current legislative framework assists police in taking preventive measures such as removing guns from domestic violence situations. The licensing regime reduces the chances that those who are a threat to themselves or others will get access to firearms. The fully integrated databases ensure that

when an incident occurs involving a licensed gun owner, authorities are alerted and may take action to remove the firearms and/or revoke the licence.

If the licence renewal requirement was eliminated from the legislative framework, or continuous eligibility was removed from the screening process, the fundamental mandate of maintaining and promoting public safety for safe firearms ownership would be dramatically jeopardized.

In addition, police would be unaware of potential risk factors against firearms owners which could create safety concerns from an enforcement perspective. As well, non-current information could hinder or put at risk on-going investigations.

## Appendix I

### Elimination of long gun registration

Firearms registration provides the link between a firearm and its rightful owners and enhances owner's accountability for their firearms. In addition, registration:

1. provides law enforcement officers with critical information to track firearms when investigating gun crimes and gun smuggling, distinguish legally owned firearms from those illegally acquired, and develop strategies to address safety risks before responding to a call;
2. facilitates the enforcement of court ordered firearms prohibitions and allows police to take preventative action, such as removing all firearms from situations of domestic violence;
3. links a specific firearm to its owner which strengthens owner responsibility thereby increasing safe storage and reducing the chance of theft;
4. provides that investigative information to law enforcement officers on what is a legal, and what is an illegal firearm; and
5. assists law enforcement in the prosecution of firearms-related crime and court proceedings through information and affidavits.

The implementation of Bill C-24 would result in increased deficiencies through labour intensive processes. Since the firearm data would not be retained by the Registry, there would be no evidence supporting the Chief Firearms Officers decision to allow transactions to occur. On a revocation of a licence, the Chief Firearms Officer or the police would not be able to determine the total number of firearms owned by the individual or business and tracking of lost and stolen firearms would no longer be linked between the Registry and the police.

The registration process is also expected to restrict access to firearms from ineligible individuals and businesses, as firearms may only be registered or transferred to individuals or businesses with valid firearms licenses.

Licensing of firearms businesses is also expected to result in legitimate access to firearms, as all businesses and organizations that make, sell, possess, handle, display or store firearms or ammunition require a valid firearms business license. A firearms business licence is only valid for the activities specified on the licence. All employees of these businesses who are required to handle firearms on the job must have a valid firearms license. All firearms in a business inventory must have been verified by an approved verifier and registered. Businesses must submit to periodic inspections by the firearms officer to confirm that they are storing firearms and conducting business in a safe and lawful manner.