



COMMISSIONER OF FIREARMS

2021 REPORT

THE RCMP CANADIAN FIREARMS PROGRAM
CANADA'S AUTHORITY ON FIREARMS



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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF FIREARMS



It is my privilege to present the 2021 edition of the Commissioner of Firearms Report, highlighting the contributions, successes, and ongoing work of the Canadian Firearms Program (CFP).

As a national Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) program, the CFP administers the *Firearms Act* and regulations, delivers specialized support services to law enforcement, and promotes firearms safety. The CFP continues to support the Government of Canada with the changes in Canadian firearms legislation announced over the last two years.

We are focusing on streamlining our service delivery and providing a more modernized experience. We will continue to build on these efforts to better serve our more than two million individual and business clients.

In light of the evolving public health situation and the emergence of COVID-19 variants in 2021, the CFP has remained flexible and agile in our approaches, to keep both our colleagues and communities safe.

Despite the challenges that the pandemic has brought with it, I take pride in the accomplishments of the CFP, whose public safety efforts make the program a significant contributor to the RCMP's commitment to safe communities for all Canadians.

*Commissioner Brenda Lucki
Commissioner of Firearms
Royal Canadian Mounted Police*

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The 2021 Commissioner of Firearms Report summarizes the operational activities and support provided by the Canadian Firearms Program (CFP) to its more than two million licence holders. As required by the *Firearms Act*, the report is submitted annually to the Minister of Public Safety for tabling in Parliament.

CANADIAN FIREARMS PROGRAM

MISSION AND VALUES

The Canadian Firearms Program's mission is to enhance public safety by providing advice on the regulatory framework, ensuring compliance of the firearms regulatory regime and supporting law enforcement in the prevention and investigation of firearms crime and misuse. The CFP also provides Canadian and international law enforcement agencies with specialized support services vital to the prevention and investigation of firearms-related crime.

In pursuit of its mission, the CFP:

- supports the lawful ownership and use of firearms in Canada by regulating firearms licensing and registration, and provides firearms owners with quality service, fair treatment, and protection of confidential information;
- recognizes that the involvement of firearms owners and users, firearms businesses, law enforcement agencies, the provinces, the territories, federal agencies, Indigenous communities, safety instructors, and firearms verifiers is essential for effective program and service delivery;
- commits to ongoing improvement and innovation to achieve the highest levels of service and user experience;
- engages its clients and stakeholders to review and develop policies, and to communicate critical information on Program requirements and results;
- manages its resources efficiently to provide good value for money; and
- provides clear and accurate reporting of Program performance and resource management.

PARTNERS

The CFP works with various national and international partners, including but not limited to:

- **Public Safety Canada (PS):** The CFP provides firearms-related policy support and technical information.
- **Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and Global Affairs Canada (GAC):** The CFP provides technical guidance on firearms-related questions.
- **Department of Justice (DOJ):** The Criminal Law Policy Section with the support of the RCMP Legal Services Unit, consults the CFP on legal policy development in firearms-related criminal law, and provides advice to the CFP on the interpretation and implementation of firearms-related statutes, regulations, and operational policy.
- **Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC):** The CFP advises on firearms legislation and related issues that are of particular interest to Indigenous people.
- **Law Enforcement Units:** The CFP collaborates with provincial, territorial, and municipal law enforcement units on investigations leading to prosecution of individuals involved in the smuggling, trafficking, and criminal use of firearms.
- **International partners:** The CFP assists in preventing the illegal movement of firearms across borders; maintains strong relationships with law enforcement agencies from the United States and INTERPOL; and exchanges firearms tracing information electronically with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

HISTORY

In 1996, the Canadian Firearms Centre was established under the Department of Justice as a stand-alone agency to oversee the *Firearms Act*. In 2003, it became an independent agency under the Department of the Solicitor General and a Commissioner of Firearms was appointed. In 2006, responsibility for the administration of the *Firearms Act* and the operation of the Canada Firearms Centre was transferred to the RCMP. In 2008, the RCMP amalgamated the Canada Firearms Centre and the Firearms Support Services Directorate into one integrated group – the Canadian Firearms Program.

Since 2006, the CFP has supported the lawful ownership and use of firearms in Canada by administering the *Firearms Act* and its regulations, and assisting law enforcement with firearms-related investigations and expertise. The CFP falls under the authority of the Commissioner of Firearms, who is also the Commissioner of the RCMP.

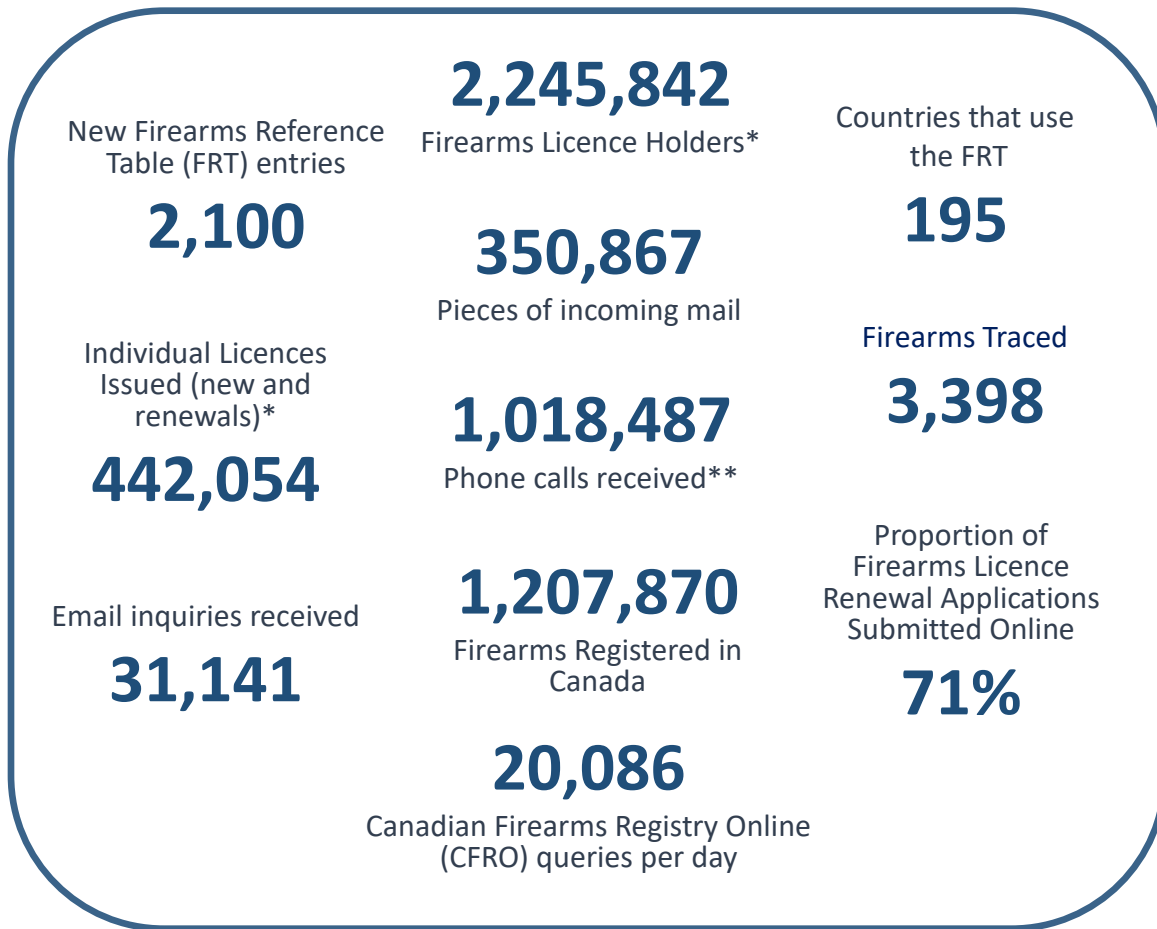


ADMINISTRATION OF THE *FIREARMS ACT*

The CFP administers the *Firearms Act* and related regulations, including the licensing of individuals and businesses through Chief Firearms Officers (CFOs) for each province and territory, and the registration of restricted and prohibited firearms through the Registrar of Firearms (Registrar).

The CFP's national firearms safety education and awareness programs are key for the safe use of firearms. The CFP also works with partner organizations and provincial/territorial governments to disseminate information to firearm owners and users, and to the general public.

2021: Canadian Firearms Program by the Numbers



* includes PALs and Minors Licences

** includes Firearms Service Delivery (FSD) Directorate and Chief Firearms Offices across Canada

NOTEWORTHY IN 2021

COVID-19 PANDEMIC: Ongoing Impacts

Due to measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Canadian Firearms Program (CFP), like so many other service providers in Canada, continued to experience significant impacts in 2021, specifically in the area of service delivery.

The CFP followed all required public health measures in our offices across the country in a continued effort to minimize the effects of COVID-19. Since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, the CFP has been vigilant about ensuring that messaging has been updated on our

website, as well as through the toll-free information line (1-800-731-4000), to inform clients which service areas were experiencing delays. The Program also experienced unprecedented high call volumes, and therefore clients may have experienced longer than normal wait times. The CFP has continued to improve the effectiveness of all of our services, and strives to reduce call volume and overall wait times by increasing staffing levels and increasing web content to provide alternate options for obtaining information.

To deliver its key services throughout the pandemic, as well as address workloads that were impacted as the result of COVID-19, the CFP increased capacity of front-line employees and in other critical functions by drawing on all available staffing mechanisms, and by adopting solutions that would allow for continued access throughout the pandemic. This included:

- supplying employees with equipment to work remotely where possible;
- encouraging the use of collaborative tools to employees, such as MS Teams and Cisco Webex for video calls and conferences;
- training employees on new processes and cross training to allow for temporary movement of staff between various units within the CFP as required to process backlogs;
- hiring students through the Federal Student Work Experience Program, which provided additional capacity and support to the existing workforce; and
- implementing rotating staff schedules to ensure office coverage, as required.

As the pandemic evolved in 2021 and new variants emerged, the CFP respected the limits on the number of employees who could be present at the workplace, in an effort to reduce and prevent the spread of the infectious disease. A number of employees continued to work remotely, while others remained onsite to perform duties that could not be completed outside of the office.

TEMPORARY PROCESS FOR HAVING DEACTIVATION ADDED AS A BUSINESS LICENCE CONDITION

Between February and August 2021, the CFP initiated a project to address the needs of Canadian businesses interested in performing the deactivation of firearms. This temporary project was intended for licensed businesses who were capable of gunsmithing work.

Businesses were provided with an opportunity to express interest in participating in the approval process to have deactivation included as a condition on their licence. Those who were interested notified their CFO of their wish to perform deactivation work, and upon CFO authorization, they were asked to submit a deactivated firearm sample for inspection and review.

The process resulted in an additional 40 businesses being approved to perform the deactivation of firearms across the country. Increasing this capacity by 55% within the business community allows for improved services, to better address the needs of firearms owners across Canada.

CHANGES TO SERVICE FEES

A number of CFP service fees have been adjusted to reflect inflation. The annual rate of inflation is determined by the All-items Consumer Price Index, published by Statistics Canada.

In 2017, the Government of Canada introduced the *Service Fees Act* to replace the *User Fees Act*. All government departments and agencies that charge fees for services are impacted by this legislation, including the CFP. The *Service Fees Act* increases transparency, accountability and predictability regarding service fees. It helps to ensure that fees charged to Canadians by federal departments and agencies remain current and better reflect the costs of delivering related services.

Please refer to <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/firearms/changes-service-fees> for a list of CFP service fees. Please note that CFP service fees are adjusted annually on March 31st.

ELEMENTS OF BILL C-71 COMING INTO FORCE

In June 2019, *An Act to amend certain Acts and Regulations in relation to firearms* (the former Bill C-71) received Royal Assent. Two legislative changes of former Bill C-71, removing the automatic Authorizations to Transport (ATT) restricted and prohibited firearms to most locations, and mandatory lifetime background checks for licence applicants, were brought into force on July 7, 2021.

These two legislative changes:

- Have expanded background checks to include a review of an applicant's entire life history, rather than just the previous five years; and
- Require licenced owners of registered firearms to apply to the CFO for an ATT to transport a restricted or prohibited firearm to any place other than to
 - an approved shooting club or shooting range within the owner's province of residence, or
 - to the firearm's place of storage after purchase.

An ATT for firearms to and from a range within the owner's province of residence and for transportation of a newly purchased firearm will continue to be automatically granted for restricted firearms and certain prohibited handguns, if a CFO approved these firearms as

acquired for the purpose of target shooting. Owners are now required to contact the CFO to obtain an individual ATT for trips involving transport of a restricted or prohibited firearm to a gun show; to or from a Canadian port of entry or exit; to a peace officer or CFO for verification or disposal; for sale, appraisal, export, or repair; or for any other purpose.

The remaining provisions of the former Bill C-71 (pertaining to licence verification prior to any transfer of a non-restricted firearm, and mandatory record keeping by businesses transferring non-restricted firearms) were not brought into force during 2021, and as such did not affect firearms owners during this year.

CHANGES IN ALBERTA AND SASKATCHEWAN'S CHIEF FIREARMS OFFICERS: FROM FEDERAL TO PROVINCIAL

In September 2021, the Governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan designated provincial CFOs in their respective jurisdictions.

The *Firearms Act* gives the provinces authority to appoint their own CFO to administer certain aspects of the *Act* in their jurisdiction. The role and responsibilities of the CFOs under the *Firearms Act* are the same, whether they are federally or provincially appointed. Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and now Alberta and Saskatchewan, have opted to administer the *Act* within their jurisdiction and have provincially appointed CFOs, who are employees of their respective provincial governments.

Federally appointed CFOs currently administer the *Firearms Act* in Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba, British Columbia, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. The federally appointed CFOs are RCMP employees.

The CFP welcomes the two new provincially-appointed CFOs, and looks forward to working closely with these offices in the administration of the *Firearms Act*.

DEFINING THE DIGITAL FUTURE OF THE CANADIAN FIREARMS PROGRAM

In 2021, the CFP entered a period of significant change, a major component of which is the Canadian Firearms Digital Services Solution (CFDSS) project. The CFDSS project is an initiative to modernize and digitize CFP systems and processes, specifically focused on reimagining service delivery through process re-engineering and the adoption of new digital capabilities. With practical goals of improving user experience, better serving CFP clients, increasing processing times by reducing reliance on paper-based applications, and increasing the program's ability to implement legislative changes, the CFDSS project will align the program with current service delivery models.

The CFDSS project will be completed in two phases over a five-year period, using agile, iterative, and user-centric methods. Phase one, which started in June 2021 and runs through September 2022, is mainly focused on designing and prototyping the new solution. A key deliverable for this phase also includes the development of a new public-facing portal that will allow, for the first time, individuals to submit an application for a new Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) online. Currently, the PAL application process is entirely paper-based.

In support of the user-centric approach being used for this project, the CFP has undertaken initial user experience research with the support of a contractor. This included interviewing employees, consulting subject matter experts, speaking with a small number of clients, and conducting a client survey to gain a better understanding of current processes and tools.

Finally, the CFP has entered into a partnership with the Canadian Digital Service (CDS) to begin to develop user experience and usability testing capabilities within the CFP and IM/IT Program, which will allow the program to conduct these activities for the remainder of the CFDSS project, and future IT projects.



By the end of 2026, the CFDSS project aims to provide a digital channel for 100% of individual services and 75% of business services – enabling the CFP to service its clients and continue to uphold public safety in a way that is modern, efficient, and simple.

CFP CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC SAFETY

FIREARMS LICENSING

In Canada, an individual must possess a valid firearms licence to be authorized to acquire, use, or own a firearm, as well as to acquire ammunition. The licence requirement does not apply where an individual is using a firearm under the direct and immediate supervision of a valid firearms licence holder.

Under the existing licensing regime, individuals must apply for a licence to the CFO in their province or territory of residence. All applicants are screened to ensure that there are no reasons why, in the interest of public safety, they should not possess a firearm.

There are two main types of firearms licences available to individuals in Canada:

1. The Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL), issued to individuals aged 18 and older.
2. The Minor's Licence, primarily issued to individuals between the ages of 12 and 17 to use, but not acquire, a firearm.

Subsection 5(1) of the *Firearms Act* provides that a person is not eligible to hold a firearms licence if it is not desirable in the interests of safety of the individual, or any other person. Subsection 5(2) of the *Firearms Act* sets out criteria that must be considered by CFOs (or a provincial court judge on a reference hearing) in determining eligibility to obtain a licence or in determining a person's continuous eligibility to hold a licence.

As of December 31, 2021, there were 2,245,842 licensed individuals across Canada, which includes both PAL holders and individuals who hold a Minor's Licence (Table 1).

Province or Territory	PAL	Minor's Licence	TOTAL
Alberta	339,322	2,191	341,513
British Columbia	331,059	856	331,915
Manitoba	94,323	474	94,797
New Brunswick	71,017	144	71,161
Newfoundland and Labrador	75,168	446	75,614
Northwest Territories	5,963	29	5,992
Nova Scotia	74,980	490	75,470
Nunavut	3,605	11	3,616
Ontario	625,357	3,665	629,022
Prince Edward Island	6,561	28	6,589

Quebec	486,355	117	486,472
Saskatchewan	115,078	367	115,445
Yukon	8,195	41	8,236
TOTAL	2,236,983	8,859	2,245,842

After seeing a slight decline in licensed individuals in 2020 due to a decrease in the availability of firearms safety training course offerings under the impact of COVID-19, and the Firearms Service Delivery (FSD) Directorate operating at a reduced capacity, the usual trend of year-over-year increase returned (Table 2), with the total number of licensed individuals increasing by 1.77% in 2021.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF POSSESSION AND ACQUISITION LICENCE (PAL) AND MINOR'S LICENCE HOLDERS, 2017 to 2021				
2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
2,109,531	2,183,827	2,219,344	2,206,755	2,245,842

In 2021, the CFP issued 442,054 individual licences, including new licences and renewals for Possession and Acquisition Licences and new Minor's Licences (Table 3).

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL LICENCES ISSUED BY PROVINCE OR TERRITORY, 2021				
Province or Territory	Acquisition Licence		Minor's Licence	
	New	Renewal	New	Renewal
Alberta	27,288	45,492	985	74
British Columbia	28,432	43,354	368	19
Manitoba	5,631	12,095	253	21
New Brunswick	3,224	9,763	61	13
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,625	10,494	196	19
Northwest Territories	392	691	16	1
Nova Scotia	3,378	9,441	171	40
Nunavut	239	304	7	0
Ontario	29,968	86,492	1,661	82
Prince Edward Island	402	879	19	2
Quebec	24,299	68,390	60	1
Saskatchewan	7,258	15,574	192	11
Yukon	483	1,179	13	2
TOTAL	133,619	304,148	4,002	285

A firearms licence allows an individual to obtain, possess, and use firearms that fall into three different categories of privileges: non-restricted, restricted and prohibited. Individuals who want to own non-restricted firearms must complete the Canadian Firearms Safety Course (CFSC).

In order to obtain restricted and/or prohibited privileges on a licence, an individual must successfully complete the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course (CRFSC).

In 2021, there were 1,509,507 Possession and Acquisition Licences with non-restricted privileges, 683,954 with restricted privileges, and 43,499 with prohibited privileges (Table 4).

TABLE 4: POSSESSION AND ACQUISITION LICENCE (PAL) PRIVILEGES BY PROVINCE OR TERRITORY, 2021*				
Province or Territory	Non-Restricted	Restricted	Prohibited	Unassigned
Alberta	174,486	158,803	6,031	2
British Columbia	166,960	156,591	7,497	11
Manitoba	65,347	27,402	1,573	1
New Brunswick	57,180	12,227	1,610	0
Newfoundland and Labrador	67,718	6,955	495	0
Northwest Territories	4,728	1,192	43	0
Nova Scotia	54,860	18,184	1,936	0
Nunavut	3,265	331	9	0
Ontario	405,515	204,399	15,442	1
Prince Edward Island	4,644	1,756	161	0
Quebec	426,772	53,346	6,230	7
Saskatchewan	72,082	40,669	2,326	1
Yukon	5,950	2,099	146	0
TOTAL	1,509,507	683,954	43,499	23
<p>Note: Possession and Acquisition Licence holders are able to obtain multiple privileges. These numbers represent the maximum privileges a client holds.</p> <p>*Unassigned refers to valid licences that currently hold no acquisition privileges. This uncommon situation can occur when a licensee transfers their last grandfathered prohibited firearm and the privilege is removed at the time of the approval of the transfer.</p>				

FIREARMS BUSINESSES

A business, museum or organization that manufactures, sells, possesses, handles, displays, or stores firearms or ammunition must have a valid firearms business licence. Employees who handle firearms for these businesses must also have valid firearms licences, and be listed as employees on the business licence. All restricted and prohibited firearms in a business inventory must be registered. CFOs perform periodic business inspections to verify safe and lawful business practices and proper firearms storage. The CFP offers businesses the option of performing firearms registrations and transfers through the Business Web Services online portal. As of December 31, 2021, there were 4,158 firearms businesses (not including carriers and museums) in Canada licensed under the *Firearms Act*. Of these, 1,710 were licensed to sell only ammunition (Table 5).

Licence Purpose	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
All Business Licences	4,478	4,442	4,437	4,154	4,158
Ammunition Only	2,022	2,004	1,981	1,740	1,710
*Excluding museums and carriers					

SHOOTING CLUBS AND RANGES

CFOs are responsible for the approval of shooting clubs and ranges within their jurisdictions to ensure safe operation and compliance with the *Firearms Act*. Standards set out in the *Firearms Act* and the *Shooting Clubs and Shooting Ranges Regulations* are intended to ensure the safety of members, visitors and the general public. Each range must comply with any federal, provincial, or municipal legislation and by-laws applicable to the range location.

In 2021, there were approximately 1,322 shooting ranges in Canada.

FIREARMS LICENCE APPLICATION REFUSALS

Under the *Firearms Act*, CFOs are authorized to refuse an application for a firearms licence based on their assessment of the applicant's potential risk to public safety.

In 2021, there were 1,227 firearms licence applications refused for various public safety reasons (Tables 6 and 7). An individual may challenge any licence application refusal by applying to a provincial court for a reference hearing, unless the individual has been prohibited from owning firearms through a court-ordered firearms prohibition.

Year	Refusals
2017	817
2018	827
2019	946
2020	1,112
2021	1,227
*The statistics provided are a snapshot in time and reflect the number of refusals processed within the given year.	

As part of the CFP's mandate to promote public safety, firearms licence applicants are screened to assess their eligibility to possess a firearms licence. After a firearms licence is issued, continuous eligibility screening is conducted over the term of the licence. Information of concern that is brought to the attention of a CFO may bring an individual's eligibility to hold a licence into question. That individual might then be subject to review and further investigation (Table 7).

TABLE 7: REASONS FOR FIREARMS LICENCE APPLICATION REFUSALS, 2021*	
Reason	Refusals
Court-ordered prohibition/probation	280
Domestic violence	74
Drug offences	32
Mental health	202
PAL ineligible	7
Potential risk to others	454
Potential risk to self	260
Provided false information	365
Unsafe firearm use and storage	34
Violent behaviour	163
*A firearms licence application refusal can be influenced by more than one reason, therefore the sum of refusal reasons will exceed the annual total number of firearms licence applications refused.	

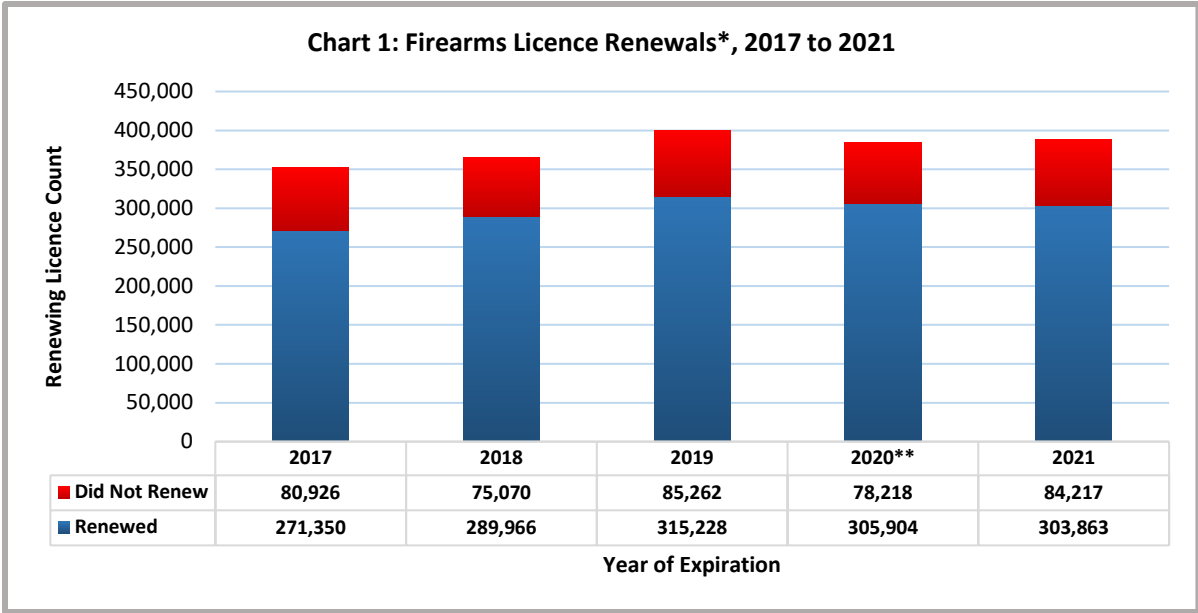
FIREARMS LICENCE RENEWALS

Under the *Firearms Act*, firearms licence holders are responsible for renewing their licences prior to expiry. The CFP facilitates this process by sending renewal notices to licencees approximately 90 days prior to the expiry of their current licence. As a condition of their licence, licencees are legally required to advise the CFO of any address changes, which helps to ensure they receive the renewal notice.

A total of 388,080 individual PAL licences expired in 2021 (Chart 1). There were 56,319 expired licenses with a restricted or prohibited firearm registered to them at the time of expiration. Of these expired licences, 51,710 licence holders renewed them, but 4,609 licence holders did not (Chart 2). The CFP works internally and with program partners to follow up on those individuals who do not renew their licences to determine the current status of their firearms.

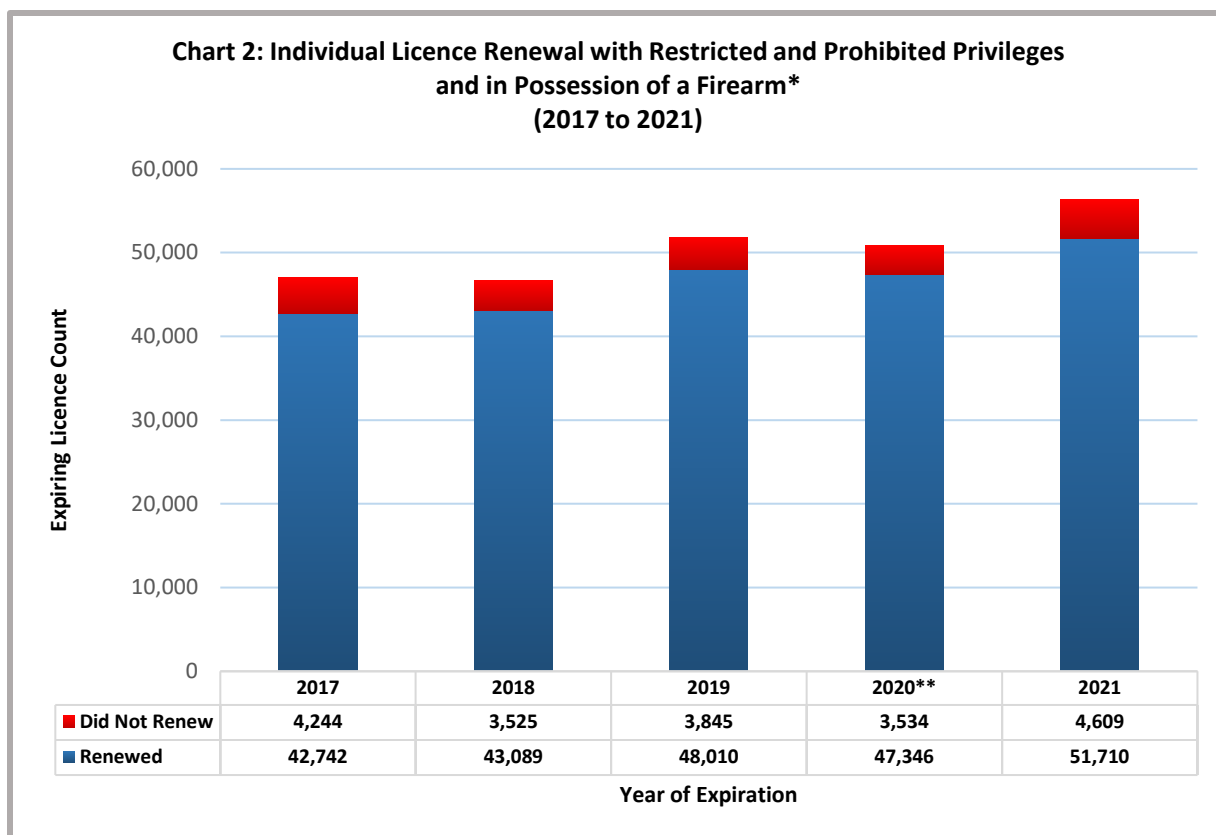
The CFP provides an option for online licence renewal on their website at <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/firearms/licence-renewal-individuals>. While the number of online renewal applications has risen year-over-year, uptake has been slower than expected. The use of online renewal services has increased across every age group; however, individuals over the age of 60 are still much more likely to complete a paper application (41-65%) than those 59 and younger. Additionally, individuals with addresses in rural areas are less likely than those in urban areas to renew online.

In 2017, the Governor in Council brought into force an amendment to the *Firearms Act*, which provides firearms owners an automatic six-month extension period for a firearms licence that has not been renewed before the expiry date. During the extension period, a firearm owner is not allowed to use their firearms or acquire firearms or ammunition until the licence is renewed. More information on the six-month extension period can be found on the CFP’s website.



*Note: When a licence has expired, a registration revocation notice is sent to the licence holder 30 days after the licence expiry date. If there is no change in the licence holder's file within 90 days after the revocation, a report is sent to the police of jurisdiction for follow-up. A lack of renewal could be associated with a licence holder having disposed of his/her firearm(s), moved outside Canada, or having passed away.

**Note: Anomalies in statistics for 2020 renewal statistics are attributed to a backlog in the processing of applications due to circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.



* When a licence has expired, a registration certificate is revoked and a revocation notice is sent to the licence holder. If there is no change in the licence holder's file, a report is sent to the police of jurisdiction for follow-up. Non-renewals could be associated with a licence holder having disposed of his/her firearm(s), moved outside Canada, or passed away.

CONTINUOUS ELIGIBILITY SCREENING OF FIREARMS LICENCE HOLDERS

At any point during an individual's licence validity period, an event could occur that prompts a review of their eligibility to hold a firearms licence.

If a firearms licence holder is involved in an event which could affect their eligibility (as determined under section 5 of the *Firearms Act*), it is reported by law enforcement via the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) database and sent to the relevant CFO for review. An event can also be reported by individuals using the CFP's 1-800 number. In these cases, a CFO is authorized to review the incident, which could result in the refusal or the revocation of a firearms licence.

Courts may also order a firearms prohibition under sections 109 or 110 of the *Criminal Code*, that do not require CFO intervention.

FIREARMS LICENCE REVOCATIONS

Under the *Firearms Act*, CFOs are authorized to revoke a firearms licence based on their assessment of the licence holder's risk to public safety. There were 3,096 firearms licences revoked in 2021 (Tables 8 and 9). Similar to licence application refusals, an individual may challenge a licence revocation by applying to a provincial court for a reference hearing, unless the revocation is the result of a court-ordered firearms prohibition. As a result, some of these revocations may have been referred to, or overturned by, the courts since the initial revocation.

Year	Revocations
2017	2,662
2018	3,012
2019	3,220
2020	2,888
2021	3,096

*These statistics provided are a snapshot in time and reflect the number of revocations processed within the given year.

Reason	Revocations
Court-ordered prohibition/probation	1,441
Domestic violence	152
Drug offences	27
Mental health	563
PAL ineligible	3
Potential risk to others	728
Potential risk to self	528
Provided false information	312
Unsafe firearm use and storage	114
Violent behaviour	177

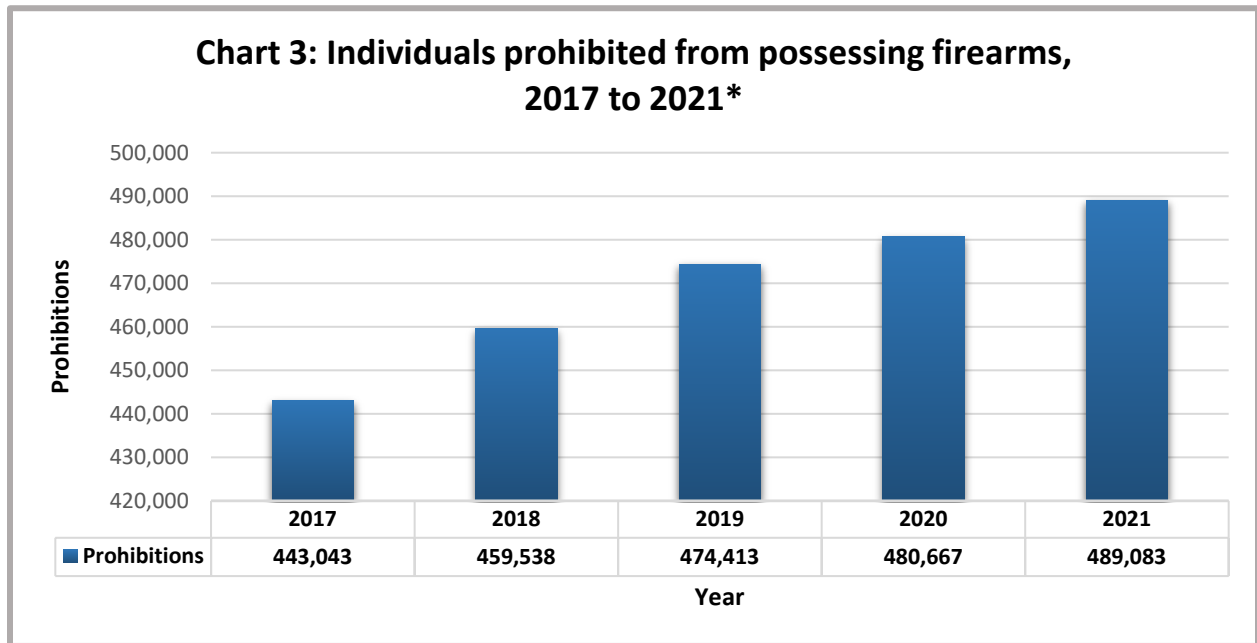
*The revocation of a firearms licence can be influenced by more than one reason, therefore the sum of revocation reasons will exceed the annual total of firearms licences revoked.

Firearms licence application refusals and firearms licence revocations are recorded in the CFP's Canadian Firearms Information System (CFIS) national database. Individuals who have an application refused or a licence revoked cannot avoid this decision by moving from one municipal or provincial/territorial jurisdiction to another.

FIREARMS PROHIBITION ORDERS FOR INDIVIDUALS

Under section 89 of the *Firearms Act*, every court, judge, or justice that makes, varies, or revokes a firearms prohibition order must notify the CFO in their jurisdiction. Firearms licence applicant

screening includes checking whether an applicant is subject to a prohibition order. A prohibition order prevents an individual from legally possessing a firearm for a specified period of time and results in the refusal of a firearms licence application or the revocation of a firearms licence. Under section 113 of the *Criminal Code*, special provisions may be made for an individual against whom a prohibition order is made, to possess a firearm if they are able to establish to the satisfaction of a competent authority that they require a firearm for the purpose of hunting or trapping in order to sustain themselves or their family, or for employment. As of December 31, 2021, there were 489,083 individuals prohibited from possessing firearms (Chart 3).



NOTE: Data generated from CPIC.

*Prohibition orders are for a specified period of time and can carry over from year to year. The totals reflect current prohibition orders and not only those that are newly issued.

REGISTRATION

All firearms fall into one of three classes, as defined in subsection 84(1) of the *Criminal Code*:

- Non-restricted firearms - typically shotguns and rifles;
- Restricted firearms - predominantly handguns; and
- Prohibited firearms - certain handguns and fully automatic or converted automatic firearms.

All restricted and prohibited firearms in Canada possessed by individuals or businesses must be registered. However, before a firearm can be registered for the first time, it must be verified. Verification is the process used by an approved verifier to confirm the identification and class of

a firearm. The CFP, through the Registrar of Firearms, coordinates the National Verifiers Network. The National Verifiers Network authorizes verifiers and responds to all inquiries about becoming a certified verifier.

Applicants who wish to register a firearm must have a firearms licence allowing them to possess the corresponding class of firearm. In other words, a firearms licence with the appropriate privileges is required to register a restricted or prohibited firearm. When a registered firearm is transferred to a new owner, the Registrar of Firearms will issue a new registration certificate if the new owner is eligible to possess that class of firearm. The registration certificate number links a firearm to its licensed owner in the CFIS database. As with the firearms licensing data, a subset of registration information can then be accessed by law enforcement agencies via CPIC.

As of December 31, 2021, there were 1,207,870 restricted or prohibited firearms registered to individuals or businesses in Canada (Tables 10 and 11).

TABLE 10: FIREARMS REGISTERED TO INDIVIDUALS OR BUSINESSES, BY CLASS, 2017 TO 2021*					
Firearm Class	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Prohibited	183,068	180,405	178,496	174,551	162,262
Restricted	907,362	983,792	1,057,418	990,563	1,045,608
TOTAL	1,090,430	1,164,197	1,235,914	1,165,114	1,207,870

*Data as of December 31st of each year.

TABLE 11: FIREARMS REGISTERED TO INDIVIDUALS OR BUSINESSES IN CANADA, BY CLASS AND PROVINCE OR TERRITORY, 2021*			
Province or Territory	Restricted	Prohibited	Total
Alberta	209,916	23,943	233,859
British Columbia	198,263	24,844	223,107
Manitoba	39,668	5,124	44,792
New Brunswick	19,653	3,880	23,533
Newfoundland and Labrador	8,530	1,389	9,919
Northwest Territories	1,634	265	1,899
Nova Scotia	27,704	5,491	33,195
Nunavut	341	31	372
Ontario	380,041	64,894	444,935
Prince Edward Island	2,880	710	3,590
Quebec	96,066	24,014	120,080
Saskatchewan	57,724	7,346	65,070
Yukon	3,188	331	3,519
TOTAL	1,045,608	162,262	1,207,870

*Data as of December 31, 2021

FIREARMS REGISTRATION APPLICATION REFUSALS AND CERTIFICATE REVOCATIONS

The Registrar of Firearms has the authority to refuse firearm registration applications and revoke registration certificates based on a failure to meet the eligibility criteria under the *Firearms Act*. In 2021, there were 12 firearm registration applications refused and 8,021 firearm registration certificates revoked (Table 12).

Year	Applications Refused	Certificates Revoked	Total
2017	46	8,285	8,331
2018	17	3,430	3,447
2019	8	6,027	6,035
2020	16	4,630	4,646
2021	12	8,021	8,033
TOTAL	99	30,393	30,492

SAFETY TRAINING

To be licensed to acquire firearms in Canada, individuals must demonstrate awareness of the principles relating to the safe handling and use of firearms, and familiarity with firearms law. To be eligible for a non-restricted firearms licence, an individual must successfully complete the Canadian Firearms Safety Course (CFSC) facilitated by the certified provincial instructors throughout Canada.

In order to be eligible for a restricted firearms licence, an individual must successfully complete both the CFSC and the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course (CRFSC). The CFSC and the CRFSC are fundamental firearms-education and safety-training components of the CFP.

The CFSC was developed in partnership with the provinces and territories, national organizations with an ongoing interest in firearms safety, and many firearms instructors from across Canada. The CFP is responsible for the continued development, implementation, and evaluation of national firearms safety standards, the CFSC, and the CRFSC. As outlined in the *Firearms Act*, content of the CRFSC is approved by the federal Minister.



SUCCESS AND OUTREACH

The CFP is engaged in providing outreach services to members of the Canadian public, businesses, and other policing agencies, through diverse methods such as working groups, presentations, and training sessions. In 2021, the CFP provided outreach services, despite the continued limitations imposed by COVID-19.

CANADIAN NATIONAL FIREARMS TRACING CENTRE

The Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre (CNFTC) provides an extensive firearms tracing service for Canadian, American and international law enforcement agencies. Flowing from the investments to enhance Canada's firearm control framework, a significant investment has been made to enhance the Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre.

The CNFTC provides tracing services to law enforcement nationwide, and works with international partners to trace firearms. For all trace requests, the CNFTC tracks the movement of a firearm from its manufacture or introduction into commerce by the importer through the distribution chain (wholesalers and retailers) to identify the last known owner/business. Firearm tracing provides strategic benefits in the form of linking criminal use of firearms to specific vendors, identifying trafficking routes and patterns. This assists in identifying:

- individuals and businesses that may be involved in straw purchasing;
- flags potential firearms cases for follow-up and produces investigative leads; and
- helps identify local, provincial and international crime patterns and trends.

In 2021, the CNFTC traced the origins of 3,398 firearms, a 58% increase over 2020.

NATIONAL WEAPONS ENFORCEMENT SUPPORT TEAM

The National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (NWEST) is a partnership between the RCMP and Canadian municipal and provincial police services in support of law enforcement to counter the illegal movement of firearms into and across Canada. NWEST provides technical expertise in support of police operations including assistance with firearms identification, and the preparation and execution of search warrants and prohibition orders.

Throughout the year, NWEST contributed to a number of projects and investigations, in an effort to remove illegal firearms from Canadian communities.

In 2021, NWEST completed over 7,800 calls for service, including:

- Advice and direction regarding lawful authorities for seizure, applicable charges under Part III of the *Criminal Code*, the *Firearms Act*, as well as other federal and provincial firearm related legislation;
- Assistance with project planning;

- Assistance with search warrant drafting, planning and execution;
- Assistance with the identification and verification of firearms, components, ammunition, accessories;
- Access to firearm related street pricing and coded language data;
- Photo and video analysis;
- Expert opinion evidence to the court for firearm related matters;
- Intelligence Sharing;
- Firearms investigative training; and
- Identification of illicit firearms transactions, new trends in the illicit firearms market, illegal firearms manufacturing and smuggling.

NWEST participates in provincial Integrated Firearms Trafficking Working Groups (ITFWG). The ITFWGs have been successful in facilitating increased intelligence-sharing and inter-operability among law enforcement agencies and have successfully disrupted domestic straw purchasing.

In an effort to enhance public safety and provide support to law enforcement agencies, one of the greatest successes of the National Weapons Enforcement Support Team has been its ongoing contribution to training front-line officers across Canada. This generally consists of lectures to uniformed officers and specialized units on topics such as public-safety seizures, evidentiary seizures, firearms identification, characteristics of an armed individual and the tracing of firearms.

In addition, NWEST has developed Course Training Standards for other firearms-related subjects. These courses are in demand, and NWEST is in the process of training additional officers who will be able to deliver the material. Between January and December 2021, NWEST trained a total of 4,552 law enforcement officers, as demonstrated in the table below.

NWEST TRAINING PROVIDED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT in 2021		
Month	Number of training sessions	Number of participants
January	4	57
February	19	262
March	10	298
April	10	337
May	7	78
June	9	69
July	6	66
August	7	40
September	28	501
October	26	1,975
November	30	714
December	4	155
TOTAL	160	4,552

If you have information about illegal possession or trafficking of firearms or other illicit activities, contact the RCMP at 1-800-731-4000.

SPECIALIZED FIREARMS SUPPORT SERVICES: Delivery of the Firearms Analysis Course to Law Enforcement Partners

The Specialized Firearms Support Services (SFSS) unit is a centre of expertise for the identification and description of firearms in Canada. The unit provides technical firearms information and advice to both domestic and international governments.

The unit maintains and updates the Firearms Reference Table (FRT), its primary tool to support law enforcement. The FRT contains approximately 200,154 individual records and is updated regularly. There were 2,100 new entries added to the FRT in 2021.

The FRT is not a legal instrument, but rather an administrative tool created by the RCMP's firearms experts based on criteria found in section 84 of the *Criminal Code* and the supporting "Classification Regulations" (*Regulations Prescribing Certain Firearms and other Weapons, Components and Parts of Weapons, Accessories, Cartridge Magazines, Ammunition and Projectiles as Prohibited or Restricted* SOR/98-462). The aforementioned Act and Regulations are the prevailing legal authority with respect to firearm classification. The FRT is available to all police and regulatory agencies in Canada, and is relied upon by 195 INTERPOL member countries.

In 2021, SFSS continued its ongoing role of improving and supporting the development and delivery of the Firearms Analysis Course (FAC) with various law enforcement partners across Canada. RCMP NWEST members in British Columbia (B.C.), the ATF, and the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSEU) in B.C. worked with SFSS to extend this training program to our partners in B.C.

In order to be able to produce Firearms Analysis Certificates for court, officers were trained in the safe handling of firearms, the types of firearms actions, firearms marking identification using the FRT, and how to provide expert court testimony.

The FAC was developed in partnership with various police agencies across Canada to further develop and enhance their operational capability when dealing with firearms-related offences. The FRT training provided to our law enforcement partners helped enhance their ability to stop the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of illegal firearms across Canada and internationally.

FIREARMS INTERNET INVESTIGATIONS SUPPORT UNIT

The Firearms Internet Investigations Support Unit (FIISU) conducts open-source internet investigations in support of CFOs regarding firearms licensing, firearms licence renewals, and the continuous eligibility of individuals to possess a firearms licence. FIISU strictly adheres to

acceptable user policies around internet open source investigations, including investigative activities, adherence to mandate and collection and storage of data. FIIISU also coordinates and collaborates with law enforcement agencies at the municipal, regional, provincial/territorial, federal, and international levels to assist in the collection of case-specific information pertaining to ongoing law enforcement investigations.

In 2021, FIIISU contributed:

- open source support in response to 203 requests from law enforcement; and
- open source support in response to 82 regulatory requests.

In 2021, FIIISU served and supported its law enforcement partners: RCMP National Security, RCMP Tactical Internet Operational Support (TIOS), RCMP Detachments, Protective Policing, our provincial partners, municipal partners, CBSA, as well as our international partners, the ATF and U.S. Homeland Security. FIIISU also served and supported CFOs across the country, with open-source reports at the request of Firearms Officers.

CHIEF FIREARMS OFFICER

On the heels of the successful information pamphlet for firearms owners and their family members about dementia that was created for the Alzheimer's Society of Oxford, and reported in the Commissioner of Firearms 2020 Report, employees of the Chief Firearms Officer of Ontario began discussions with the Ontario Police College and the University of Western Ontario on the matter of educational material regarding domestic violence and mental wellness in communities.

The committee work and collaboration will continue into 2022, with the goals of having relevant material added to their respective websites and presented to uniformed personnel of the Chief Firearms Officer throughout the year.

MOVING FORWARD

In 2022, the CFP will continue its efforts to modernize and digitize its systems and processes, which, among other benefits, will improve client experience when applying for, or renewing, a firearms licence.

In alignment with the strategic objectives of the RCMP and the Government of Canada's commitment to reduce gun and gang violence, the CFP will continue to work closely with domestic and international partners to combat firearms trafficking in the coming year, to reduce criminal activity and further strengthen national security. This will include building new initiatives and enhancing our existing services to support investigations through the provision of firearms

support, firearms inspections and identification, intelligence development and analysis, and training, as part of *The Initiative to Take Action against Gun and Gang Violence* (ITAAGGV).