

FIREARM FACTS:

REALITIES OF FIREARMS OWNERSHIP AND USE IN CANADA



- **POPULARITY IN CANADA:** There are 2.2 million licensed firearms owners, ~4,500 firearm and ammunition businesses, ~1,400 shooting ranges, and more than 1,235,000 restricted or prohibited firearms registered to individuals/businesses in Canada. **Source:** [2019 Commissioner of Firearms Report](#)
- **VALUE IN CANADA:** Firearms are an essential component of hunting, trapping, and sport shooting, and these activities result in almost \$9 billion in spending and contribute \$6 billion to the GDP, while supporting 47,000 jobs and almost \$3 billion in labour income. **Source:** [Conference Board of Canada](#)
- **LICENSING:** There are three main types of firearms licences in Canada – non-restricted, restricted, prohibited. All handguns are classified as restricted (or prohibited) firearms in Canada.
- **TRAINING:** It requires demonstrated competency to receive a firearms licence (Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL)) by passing written and practical tests (min. 80%) following the completion of the mandatory Canadian Firearms Safety Course. Anyone wanting to acquire restricted firearms must also take the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course and pass additional written and practical tests. PALs with prohibited privileges are only available to individuals with grandfathering for a prohibited firearm. See [OFAH's What's Involved in Acquiring a Firearms Licence in Canada](#) for more details.
- **ELIGIBILITY & REFUSAL:** Firearms owners are one of the most vetted segments of Canada's population. New PAL applicants undergo a rigorous screening process (background check), and between 2014 and 2019, 4,854 applications were refused. **Source:** [2019 Commissioner of Firearms Report](#)
- **LICENCE REVOCATIONS:** Existing firearms owners undergo daily "continuous eligibility" screening to verify there has been no criminal activity since acquiring their licence. Between 2014 and 2019, 15,822 licences were revoked. Revocations (and refusals) occur for many reasons, including court-ordered prohibitions/probation, domestic violence, mental health, potential risk to self and others, and violent behaviour. In 2019, there were 474,413 individuals prohibited from possessing firearms. **Source:** [2019 Commissioner of Firearms Report](#)
- **REGISTRATION:** Restricted and prohibited firearms are ALL required to be registered with the RCMP and use of these firearms is significantly constrained through strict regulation.
- **STORAGE & TRANSPORTATION:** There are strict rules for storing and transporting firearms, especially restricted firearms (e.g. handguns). Restricted firearms must be stored unloaded, locked, and in a locked box, or unloaded in a safe. Restricted firearms can only be transported unloaded, inoperable (e.g. with locking device), in a locked container, and requiring an Authorization to Transport (ATT) from the Chief Firearms Officer that states it can only occur for a specified purpose and in the most direct route. It is a federal offence if found in possession of restricted or prohibited firearm in an unauthorized location. Beyond police, there are very few citizens authorized to carry handguns, and it is generally related to a profession (e.g. armoured truck guards). All restricted firearms owners are required to join a government-certified shooting club to be eligible for an ATT.

THE TAKE-HOME

Licensed Canadian firearms owners are highly trained, highly vetted, and highly regulated. Canadians licensed to own restricted firearms are only permitted to store, transport, and use firearms under very strict circumstances. Canada has a proven system that identifies issues and works to keep legal firearms away from individuals who should not possess them.