

mandatory period. However, the Special Committee has been convinced that a minimum of 28 days must pass between the application for and issuance of an FAC. Moreover, until such time as the courses are in place, there will be the need for some sort of waiting period. Therefore, the Committee suggests that the legislation provide that, in the case of a first-time applicant for an FAC, there must be a 28-day mandatory waiting period and the successful completion of the standardized safety training course before the issuance of an FAC.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Special Committee recommends that the legislation provide that an FAC will be issued only after a 28-day waiting period and after the successful completion of the implemented mandatory national competency and safety course.

3. RENEWAL PROCEDURE

The present FAC provisions contained in the Criminal Code do not provide for the renewal of a certificate. Once it expires, the holder is in the same position as someone who has never held an FAC. Groups such as the Canadian Wildlife Federation and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters have been urging the government, since the FAC system was adopted by Parliament in 1977, to develop a renewal procedure that involved less bureaucracy and expense than a complete re-application process.

Whatever the merits of this approach may have been in the past, the Special Committee believes that the creation of such a procedure is clearly necessary and justifiable given the expanded and strengthened screening system which we have recommended for first-time applicants. Those who have gone through this new process will have passed strict screening and training requirements that will ensure that they are trustworthy and competent with firearms. Thereafter, only minimal screening should be required. This can be done both effectively and efficiently with little inconvenience to the FAC-holder. Such a renewal procedure would not only respond to complaints about the present system, but it would alleviate many of the concerns that were expressed by witnesses about the proposed addition to the FAC process which they saw as too onerous.

While it might be suggested that a renewal procedure would turn the FAC into a possession permit, that is not the case. Only someone who wishes to purchase another firearm after the initial FAC has expired will require another certificate. Many FAC-holders, especially hunters, maintain a current certificate so that they can borrow firearms in the event that their own gun is lost or damaged. Those who require firearms for their livelihood may require an FAC at all times so that they can acquire firearms on short notice as circumstances dictate. Others will want to be in possession of a current FAC so that there is no question about the status of their possession of a firearm.

The Special Committee expects that FACs will continue to be valid for a period of 5 years, and an application for renewal would have to be made either before the expiration of this period or within a reasonable period thereafter. The renewal form could be affixed in some way to the original FAC in order to facilitate the opportunity to send the renewal form to a firearms officer by mail. This would lessen any travelling burden which might be experienced by people in rural or remote areas of the country.