

Permits are required for the export of military goods and technology to all destinations except the United States. The approval of the Minister of Foreign Affairs may be sought for the export of offensive military goods and technology, unless destined for NATO allies or a small group of specified like-minded countries. The Minister is also consulted about cases involving non-offensive military goods and technology, should concerns exist about any of the above-mentioned criteria. Before the Minister's approval is sought, extensive consultations are held among human rights, international security and defence industry experts at DFAIT, with the Department of National Defence and, where appropriate, with other government departments and agencies. These consultations involve reviewing the latest information and best policy advice on Canada's defence and industrial relations with the recipient country, regional peace and stability (including civil conflict), and the human rights situation, including trends. Careful attention is also paid to the end-use documentation to ensure that the goods are indeed going to a legitimate end-user and will not be diverted.

Particular care is taken over applications involving firearms. Automatic weapons can be exported only to countries on the Automatic Firearms Country Control List (AFCCL) (see Annex 1). These are countries (currently 16) with which Canada has concluded intergovernmental defence, research, development and production agreements. The vast bulk of reported exports do not involve such modern military weapons. Rather, they involve sporting and recreational firearms, which are controlled only because they are captured by the Wassenaar definition or by other international obligations such as the Firearms Protocol of the United Nations Organized Crime Convention. Where possible, we have sought to differentiate exports of purely military small arms from ordinary, non-automatic firearms sold to civil or police end-users, and from small bore or smooth bore sporting weapons, which we control but are not captured on the Wassenaar Munitions List. Because many Canadian firearms exports are to private end-users, a number of steps are taken to ensure the firearms do not slip into the illegal arms trade or fuel local lawlessness or violence. Information may therefore be sought from our missions and from other sources about destination countries' firearms control laws and procedures. We want to know not only what exists on paper, but also how strict enforcement is and whether these laws and procedures are open to corruption. We also check the bona fides of the end-users.

All applicants seeking export permits for firearms are therefore required to provide an import permit or some equally valid evidence that their import will be allowed. This ensures that firearms do not leave Canada without an assurance that they will be allowed into the country of destination and that the recipient will be permitted to take possession of them.