

The time required for a firearms officer to update the status of the applicant should be minimal in most cases. The officer would only be required to perform the same minimum checks set out in the National Firearms Manual in terms of computer searches and a review of local and provincial indices. The officer would have to review only a minimal amount of information needed to verify that the applicant for renewal had maintained a clean record since being granted an FAC. However, the Special Committee recommends that where an application for renewal is made after the expiration of the FAC, but within a reasonable time thereafter, the firearms officer should have the discretion to require the applicant to demonstrate firearms competency on a basis similar to that recommended for transitional applicants in the next section of this report.

Once the basic checks are completed, the applicant would be notified that he or she could come in to pick up the renewal certificate. The Special Committee believes that it is essential that the renewal applicant appear in person before the firearms officer at least once. This would allow the firearms officer to verify the renewal applicant's identification and update the photograph on the FAC. It is anticipated that officers would be equipped with camera equipment for the purpose of taking such photographs. In addition, the officer would be provided with at least a minimal opportunity to actually observe the applicant in person.

While the Special Committee believes that this process is all that would be required in the vast majority of cases, we recognize that there will be instances in which there will be cause for conducting a further investigation. The Committee therefore believes that the firearms officer should have a discretion to conduct a more thorough investigation in appropriate cases. Administrative procedures could be devised to ensure that this discretion was not invoked unnecessarily. For example, guidelines could be established by the Chief Provincial Firearms Officer, and a check on any discretion exercised by a firearms officer could be ensured by requiring that the officer submit a report to the Chief Provincial Firearms Officer.

These minimal procedures would be much less costly than the process which the Special Committee has recommended for the first-time FAC applicant. The Committee therefore feels that the fee for a renewal should be a fraction of that required to cover the costs of a full screening system which would apply to the first application.

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Special Committee recommends that a renewal procedure be established for those who wish to obtain another FAC after having gone through the full screening process recommended for first-time applicants. FACs under the new system will continue to be valid for a period of 5 years, and applications for renewal will have to be made either before the expiration date or within a reasonable period thereafter. A renewal procedure could be initiated by mail, but the renewal applicant would be required to appear in person to pick up the new certificate, and to have a current photo taken. While only a minimal check of criminal records and local police files would be necessary in all but unusual cases, the firearms officer would retain a discretion to conduct a further investigation, including requiring a personal interview, in appropriate circumstances.