

Registration

Since 1978 registration has been an essential part of the regime controlling restricted weapons. At present only restricted weapons are registered and consequently it is difficult to trace unrestricted weapons (rifles and shotguns) which are stolen or used in crime. As well, the application of prohibition orders is difficult when the peace officer has no information about the number or type of weapons an individual legally owns. Finally, because firearms acquired prior to 1978 could be retained without an FAC, it is very difficult to ascertain whether or not an unrestricted weapons has been legally obtained.

Registration ought to be part of a comprehensive gun control regime. At the same time, we understand that there is considerable resistance to the notion among the firearms community, partly founded on the misguided belief that it is the first step to confiscation. As well, the task of registering the estimated 6 million rifles and shotguns currently in circulation is enormous and such a system must be carefully considered from a number of vantage points. The feasibility of the full range of options needs to be explored. While some witnesses proposed including firearms information on the FAC, moving towards a system similar to that used for restricted weapons, others proposed point of sale systems coupled with the requirements that all loss, theft or sales of firearms be reported. The fact that it is a large undertaking, however, ought not to dissuade the government from thoroughly exploring the options in consultation with experts in information management. Throughout the country, cars are registered. In most cities, dogs are registered. Significant resources are allocated to maintaining other types of information systems.

Controls on the Sale of Ammunition

Again the police, the municipalities, physicians and others asked that the FAC or equivalent be required for the sale of ammunition. A number of options were proposed. Ammunition sales could be treated like firearms sales with the FAC number, name etc. recorded for all ammunition purchases. Or purchasers could be requested to present the FAC or equivalent in order to purchase in the same way that an age of majority card is required for alcohol purchase. Such measures would reduce the ease with which criminals could obtain ammunition. This was not included in the law.

3. SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Regulations

Assault Weapons

- these be prohibited as soon as possible
- the definition of assault weapons to be prohibited include weapons where the potential hazard to the public appears to outweigh the benefit for hunting or target shooting
- all conversions from fully automatic to semi automatic to be carefully monitored
- the gun collectors class which will be allowed to keep these weapons are carefully screened and controlled.

Magazine Capacity

- magazines should be restricted to 5 shots for long guns and 10 for handguns
- the restrictions on magazine capacity should include a narrow and precise definition of the competitors and the sports exempted from the restrictions and the way in which they will be controlled.

FAC Application

- the names, addresses, phone numbers and relationship and signatures of the references
- the class of referees be defined in a way which encourages the provision of accurate information
- sufficient information to support community checks (eg. marital status, residents at the same address, employer)

Safe Storage

- secure, locked containers of unbreakable material (ideally a safe for handguns)
- separate locked storage of ammunition
- secure trigger locks (not handcuffs)
- temporary disabling standards for any weapons to be hung or displayed in glass cases
- standards for transporting all weapons either in locked containers or the trunk
- a record of guns owned including type and serial number
- in light of the potential threat associated with theft of gun collections, higher standards for collectors which may address issues such as access to the building in which the guns are stored, for example, alarm systems. As well, collectors should be required keep a record of all firearms owned, the type, serial number, and acquisition information, subject to periodic inspection.
- standards for gun sellers and off-site storage should be most rigorous with guidelines defined for display of guns