

COMBATTING THE ILLEGAL GUN TRADE

All illegal guns begin as legal guns and strong controls on legal guns are essential to preventing the diversion of legal guns to illegal markets. Remember that if you do not know who owns what guns you have no effective control.

Source of Guns used in Crime in Canada

- Across Canada, the firearms which are recovered tend to reflect the firearms in circulation. Rifles and shotguns still account for a significant proportion of firearms recovered in crime. For example the 2006 seizures from the Malvern gang included rifles and shotguns as well as handguns and assault weapons.¹
- Rifles and shotguns are the guns most often used in the murders of women, in suicides and accidents because they are the guns most often in the home.
- More than half the police officers shot and killed in Canada have been killed with rifles and shotguns.
- Even in Toronto, rifles and shotguns account for almost half the guns recovered in crime. In a recent seizure of guns being sold illegally on the Internet, all the guns were rifles and shotguns. The last police officer shot in Toronto was shot with a shotgun. There was a high profile hostage taking with a sawed off rifle. Louise Russo was shot with a rifle. It is simply wrong to say that rifles and shotguns are not part of the problem.
- Replica firearms are also often seized.

There are three major sources of guns which are misused:

1. Legal guns misused by their owners - most often the case with domestic homicide, suicide and accidents

- A Toronto Police Officer was shot with a shotgun by a man - the father of a Toronto police officer - who despite a history of depression had access to a legal shotgun.²
- Pauline Mattis, of Toronto, was shot in the face by her husband who then turned the gun on himself. He had access to legal guns in spite of an extensive criminal record.³
- The shooter at Dawson College was a legal gun owner and member of a gun club.

2. Legal guns which are diverted to the illegal markets through theft or illegal sale: there is no virtual ban on handguns. There are 500,000 legally owned handguns in Canada.

- Legally owned guns are often improperly stored, and stolen or sold illegally.
- The gun recovered in the Boxing Day shooting which killed Jane Creba was a stolen gun.
- Louise Russo was shot with a stolen gun.
- Every year, as many as 3,000 firearms are reported stolen in Canada and in the hands of criminals.
- According to the police, about half the guns used in crime in Toronto are guns at one time legally owned in Canada, many of them stolen in breaks-in.⁴
- Between June 20 and August 3, 2005, burglars made off with 84 firearms from Toronto-area homes. More than half, including 43 pistols stolen from Cobourg area, were handguns.⁵ One of these was used in a murder in Toronto in 2006.
- Lately, the Toronto Police discovered that it was easy to buy guns over the Internet. The investigation led them to arrest four people who face a total of 276 charges and to seize many firearms⁶.
- Following a break-in in July 2004, two fingerprints led police to an apartment in Toronto, where ten rifles and shotguns were recovered. The investigation determined that the firearms had been reported stolen from a residence in a different area.⁷

¹ Toronto Police Service, "Raid Ends Gang's Reign of Terror," May 28, 2006.

² Cortoneo, Christina and Porter, Catherine "Officer hit, gunman killed" Toronto Star, January 11, 2004.

³ Huffman, Tracy, "Man died after attempted murder-suicide", Toronto Star, November 27, 2003.

⁴ Jenkins, Jonathan, Lamberti, Rob, "50 hot guns hit street", Toronto Sun, September 13, 2005

⁵ Jenkins, Jonathan, Lamberti, Rob, "50 hot guns hit street", Toronto Sun, September 13, 2005

⁶ Huffman, Tracy, "Buying Guns On Internet Too Easy", Toronto Star, November 10, 2005

- Three young men armed with knives stole three rifles, a shotgun and ammunition from a south Scarborough home after terrorizing and locking up a 63-year-old couple.⁸
- A Toronto lawyer had 14 handguns stolen from his office last month⁹ one has turned up in crime.
- Toronto Police Service conducted a review of crime handguns submitted to the Gun and Gang Task Force during 2004.

USA Source –	Canadian Source –
Traced 82 -	Not registered 26 –
Believed smuggled 29 -	On file as stolen 35 –
SUBTOTAL 111 (52%)	Canada (from unknown) 36 –
	Too old for trace 06 -
	SUBTOTAL 103 (48%)

3. *Smuggled guns originating from the US, typically acquired through theft, straw purchases, or gun shows*

- These guns account for as many as 50% of the handguns recovered in crime.
- In 2004, the Canada Border Services Agency seized 1,099 firearms at the border including 140 non-restricted firearms, 299 restricted firearms and 660 prohibited firearms.¹⁰ This is the tip of the iceberg.
- The United States has 280 million people with approximately 230 million guns (one third of them are handguns) and very few controls. Every year, 500,000 of these guns are stolen, thus entering into the illegal market.

Some examples:

- The gun used to kill Diana Sandeman on July 5, 2006 as she and her boyfriend were leaving and Etobicoke sportsbar was traced to Gainsville Georgia.¹¹
- The gun used to kill Gillian Hadley of Pickering in June 2000 was traced to the United States.
- A Canadian citizen was caught in 2004 carrying weapons from the U.S. into Canada. Trapped in a swindle, the man claimed he didn't know what he was carrying when the Canadian customs officers found 23 high-powered handguns, including a TEC-9 semi-automatic, in his car's trunk. The weapons were bound to a Toronto street gang.¹²

⁷ Commissioner of Firearms, 2004 Report, Canada Firearms Center

⁸ Lamberti, Rob, "Weapons stolen in home heist", Toronto Sun, September 6, 2005

⁹ Kohler, Nicholas, "Cache Of Guns Stolen From Lawyer's Office", National Post, October 4, 2005, p. A13

¹⁰ Commissioner of Firearms, 2004 Report, Canada Firearms Center

¹¹ CTV.ca "Gun found in Etobicoke shooting traced to U.S." July 11, 2006.

http://toronto.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20060711/sandeman_gun_060711?hub=TorontoHome

¹² Gillis, Charlie, "American guns, Canadian violence", Macleans, August 10, 2005