



Joint Statement on Firearms from the Canadian Association of Police Boards (CAPB), the Canadian Police Association (CPA), and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) - May 2010-

Representing the police boards, police officers and police leaders from across Canada, the CAPB, CPA and CACP are working collaboratively to prevent violent incidents related to firearms.

Canadians are fortunate to enjoy numerous privileges, one of which is to own and use firearms. A firearms registry provides a reasonable balance between the exercise of an individual privilege and the broader right of the society to be safe. There are innumerable other laws, regulations and practices which Canadians readily accept, and which achieve this same balance.

All firearms are potentially lethal and existing firearm laws are a necessary part of an integrated strategy to address violence. Canada is internationally renowned for its effective control of firearms. The firearms registry is an important component of our strategy to prevent misuse of firearms. We support the licensing of firearms owners *as well as* the registration of all firearms. The registry provides police with critical information about who owns firearms *and* the firearms they own, thereby preventing dangerous people and criminals from possessing firearms.

We, the three associations, are unified in our support of the new operationally-focused Canadian Firearms Program. Through the CFP, which rests on a solid regulatory foundation that includes licensing and registration, we can advance our goal of keeping Canada a safe place to live by preventing violent firearm incidents.

How the Firearms Registry Enhances Community and Police Officer Safety:

Helps police prevent crimes: Police use the registry to prevent violent incidents at homes, schools and workplaces, and have seized firearms from people who were deemed high risk. The registry prevents stockpiling of firearms by individuals, gangs and organized crime. The registry also deters people from selling firearms to unlicensed people.

Helps police investigate crimes: Due to the existence of a national firearms registry, firearms investigations currently have tremendous cost-benefit. The registry gives police an enhanced capability to conduct timely criminal investigations and, thus, serve the criminal justice system well.

Helps police trace firearms: The firearms registry is critical for tracing lost and stolen firearms, and tracing firearms used in crimes. The registry thus helps police provide community safety. Between 1974 and 2008, 40,000 long guns and 33,000 prohibited weapons were stolen from Canadian residences. At this time, there are more than 111,000 firearms in police custody for public safety reasons or after criminal use. Of these, 87,000 are long guns.

Helps promote individual and social responsibility: Canadians are demonstrating their responsibility by registering their firearms. The registry promotes accountability in terms of safely storing firearms, reporting lost or stolen firearms, and tracking transactions of firearms. Transfer of firearms ownership is commonplace in Canada, especially of long guns. A total of 1.85 million long guns have changed hands in Canada since 2006.

We believe that the national firearms registry is a valuable system that helps police services across Canada in ensuring community safety. By making information sharing easy, the registry assists police in providing consistent approaches to investigations and court proceedings. At \$4 million per year to operate, the long gun portion of the registry is cost-effective, with benefits to all provinces and territories. It is in everyone's interest to maintain this registry.