

FACT SHEET: IMPACT OF FIREARMS IN CANADA

- Canadian police services reported 8,105 victims of violent gun crime, ranging from assault to robbery and homicide in 2006 – a rate of almost 1 person per hour victimized by violent gun crime.¹
- On average more than 1,200 Canadians are killed and over 1,000 injured with firearms each year. The economic costs of gun deaths and injuries in Canada are estimated at \$6 billion per year.²

Impact on Children and Youth

- Firearms deaths are the **third leading cause of death among young people aged 15-24**.³
- Among 26 industrialized countries, **Canada ranks fifth in the rate of firearm deaths among children under the age of 14 years**.⁴ In 2004/2005, 49 Ontario children aged 10-14 required emergency department visits due to firearm injuries.⁵
- Youth (12-17 years) accused of committing a violent offence are more likely than adults to use a firearm. In 2006, Canadian police services reported 1,287 youth accused of a firearm-related violent offence – a rate of **over 3 youths per day accused of a firearm-related violent offence**.⁶
- The national rate of youth accused of a firearm-related violent crime increased by 32% between 2002 and 2006, with the 2006 rate being the **highest point recorded** since Statistics Canada began making data available in 1998.⁷
- The 2006 rates of youth accused of a firearm-related violent crime in Toronto (96.2 per 100,000 youth) is well above the national average (55.5) and **higher than all other Canadian Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs)**.⁸

¹ Statistics Canada (2008), *The Daily February 20, 2008 "Study: Firearms and Violent Crime: 2006"* Ottawa: Minister of Industry

² Miller T. "Costs associated with gunshots in Canada in 1991." *Canadian Medical Journal* 1995; 153(9): 1261-8.

³ Leonard K.A. "Firearm deaths in Canadian adolescents and young adults." *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 1994; 85(2): 128.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "Rates of homicide, suicide, and firearm-related death among children – 26 industrialized countries." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 1997; 46(5): 101-5.

⁵ SMARTRISK *Ontario Injury Compass Vol 3, Issue 11*. Nov 2006

⁶ Statistics Canada (2008), *The Daily February 20, 2008 "Study: Firearms and Violent Crime: 2006"* Ottawa: Minister of Industry

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

Public Health Impact

- **Gun violence is a serious public health issue.** Firearms are the agent of many injuries and deaths, including unintentional injuries (eg. Accidental discharge of firearms), suicide and suicide attempts, and assaults (eg. Partner violence, shootings).
- Firearms are a significant public health concern for the City of Toronto. In an average year a **person is taken to the emergency room every second day in Toronto due to a firearm injury**, either intentional or unintentional.⁹
- In both Ontario and Toronto, more people visit emergency rooms with unintentional firearm injuries – in which the person discharging the firearm does not intend to hit anyone – than with intentional injuries such as assault. **This demonstrates that the public safety threat from firearms does not depend on the intent of the user, but is related to the presence of the firearm itself.**¹⁰
- The presence of a firearm makes it more likely that a suicide attempt or partner violence will result in serious injury or death.

Firearms in Toronto

- In 2006, **one-quarter of all firearms-related violent crimes in Canada occurred in the city of Toronto**, as well as the highest proportion of violent crimes involving firearms – one-quarter of all firearm-related victimizations in Canada.¹¹
- **Handguns accounted for 86% of all firearm homicides in Toronto in 2006** (a much higher proportion than equivalent national figures).¹²
- **Toronto has almost three times the national proportional rate of “restricted” and “prohibited” firearms.**¹³ According to Canadian Firearms Registry data, there are almost 10,000 “restricted” or “prohibited” firearms registered to Toronto residents – over 1 in 4 of all firearms registered to Toronto residents.¹⁴

Tracking the Sources of Illegal Firearms

- The major sources of illegal firearms in Canada are smuggled firearms and theft from domestic sources.¹⁵ **Approximately 60% to 66% (two-thirds) of guns seized by the Toronto Police Service enter Canada illegally** across the Canada-U.S. border, and **about one-third (up to 40%) are from domestic sources.**¹⁶ In 2005, the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA)

⁹ Canadian Institute for Health Information *National Ambulatory Care Reporting System 2003-2006*

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Statistics Canada (2008), *The Daily February 20, 2008 “Study: Firearms and Violent Crime: 2006”* Ottawa: Minister of Industry

¹² Toronto Police Service (Corporate Planning – Analysis Support). Current as of January 2008.

¹³ As specified in the *Criminal Code* and *Criminal Code Regulations*. December 1, 1998. http://www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca/factsheets/r&p_e.asp

¹⁴ Chief Firearms Officer of Ontario, Canadian Firearms Registry Data. Current as of December 2007.

¹⁵ Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, *2007 Annual Report on Organized Crime in Canada*. www.cisc-scrs.gc.ca

¹⁶ Toronto Police Service.

seized 495 firearms at Canadian border crossings – a 55% drop in the number of firearms seized compared to 2004 (1,099 firearms).¹⁷

- Each day, about 5,500 new handguns are sold in the United States; there are 81,325 federally licensed dealers and pawnbrokers in the United States (three times the number of McDonald's franchises) – and 238 active federally licensed firearms manufacturers across 43 states.¹⁸
Approximately 160 handguns per hour were manufactured in the United States in 2006.¹⁹
- **Approximately 85,000 firearms, including 44,000 restricted firearms (e.g. handguns) are recorded as stolen or missing** in the Canadian Police Information Centre records (dating back to 1974).²⁰

¹⁷ Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *DPR 2004-2005 Canadian Firearms Centre*. October 26, 2005. Accessed on March 11, 2008: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/dpr1/04-05/CFC-CAFC/CFC-CAFCd45_e.asp

¹⁸ Davis, Ian (2004) *Disposal of surplus small arms: United States, Small Arms Survey 2004*, Graduate Institute for International Studies

¹⁹ Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, *Annual Firearms Manufacturers and Export Report: 2006*. January 29, 2008 Accessed on March 31, 2008: <http://www.atf.treas.gov/firearms/stats/afmer/afmer2006.pdf>

²⁰ Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, *2007 Annual Report on Organized Crime in Canada*. www.cisc-scrs.gc.ca