
INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

ILLEGAL GUN ACTION PLAN RELEASED

VANCOUVER – The Province today released an independent report, *The Illegal Movement of Firearms in British Columbia*, and committed to work toward implementing all of its recommendations.

Action on four priority items will begin immediately:

- **A new weapons unit:** The Province will establish a provincial weapons enforcement unit with an aggressive approach to investigating crimes and incidents involving illegal guns.
- **Provincial administration of Canadian firearms regulations:** Work will begin immediately to begin the transfer of responsibility for administering the Canadian firearms program from the federal to the provincial government.
- **Increased reviews:** The Province will enter into discussions with the current British Columbia chief firearms officer (CFO) demanding that the CFO immediately review its current licensing, auditing and inspection procedures to prevent the issuance of large numbers of single multi-purpose business licences, especially in relation to theatrical (prop-master) licences. The Province will examine whether to limit the number of businesses supplying firearms for movie industry use, and the inventory prop-masters can have.

Police are concerned about the privileges awarded to these types of businesses and have identified several cases where these privileges have been abused and resulted in firearms trafficking. Restrictions are needed on the number of licences granted for this particular activity, which can be done under current legislation.

- **More resources:** The Province will immediately work with the federal government to ensure the CFO reflects B.C.'s priorities by providing sufficient staff to combat illegal guns, including more rigorous and timely investigations.

Other areas in which the B.C.-commissioned report makes recommendations are:

- **Firearms Focus:** the Province take leadership by committing to a comprehensive strategy.
- **Enforcement:** the police and other agencies adopt a strong commitment to tracing of firearms and an aggressive approach to investigation and enforcement.

- Prosecution and the courts: the Province implement a policy that in possession of firearms offences, all matters, absent exceptional circumstances, proceed by way of indictment. In addition, the Province establish specialized Crown counsel positions to deal with firearms matters.
- Training and education: agencies designate, educate and train select Crown counsel and police to focus on firearms matters and provide assistance to colleagues.
- Co-ordination of effort: review current structures in the province to ensure co-ordination of efforts and sharing of information. Federal and provincial agencies work towards the development of joint strategies.
- Data collection: the Province work with other levels of government to improve the collection of data.
- Legislative and regulatory changes: the Province request the federal government to make changes and enact legislation and regulations to improve the control over the illegal movement of firearms.

The entire illegal guns report can be viewed at www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/publications/ online.

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