

Canadian Myth Busters Presents:

# 10 Myths of the Gun Registry

**Myth #1: The Gun Registry is a valuable tool for the police and they access it 6,500 times per day.**

**False:** Every legal purchase of a firearm generates three administrative hits to the registry; for the buyer, for the seller and for the firearm. With seven million firearms registered in the system, legal transfers account for the vast majority of "hits." When many police officers make a simple address or license plate check, an automatic hit is generated. Clearly, a hit on the Registry does not denote legitimate investigative use.

**Myth #2: The registry provides police officers information on the presence of firearms when they respond to emergency calls.**

**False:** No police officer relies on the inaccurate registry data to dictate how they approach a domestic or emergency call. They approach all calls with an appropriate measure of safety. The truth is, very few legally owned guns are ever used in the commission of crimes. The Firearms Registry only provides a list of the legal guns, the very guns an officer is least likely to be harmed by. The fact an individual's firearms licence is known to the police makes the registry redundant.

**Myth #3: Firearms related deaths have been reduced due to the long gun registry.**

**False:** Reduction in firearms deaths started in the mid 1970s, well prior to the introduction of the registry in 2003 (StatsCan). There is no evidence to link the reduction in deaths with the registry. It has more to do with the aging Canadian demographic than anything else.

**Myth #4: Police investigations are aided by the registry.**

**False:** Former Toronto Police Chief Julian Fantino stated (January 2003), "The law registering firearms has neither deterred these crimes nor helped us solve any of them. None of the guns we know to have been used were registered . . . the money could be more effectively used for security against terrorism as well as a host of other public safety initiatives." Information contained in the registry is incomplete and unreliable. Due to the inaccuracy of the information, it is rarely used as evidence in court. There is no credible proof that it has been a contributing factor in the investigation of any major crime.

**Myth #5: The registry protects women in violent domestic situations.**

**False:** On an average day, women's shelters refer 221 women and 112 children elsewhere due to lack of funding. Obviously, the 2 billion dollars would be better used helping these women and children than registering duck guns. It is fantasy to believe that maintaining mere list of long guns could have any effect on spousal homicide rates.

**Myth #6: The registry helps track stolen guns and forces firearms owners to be more responsible in storing their firearms. Over 50% of firearms used in crime are stolen from gun owners**

**False:** Past Department of Justice studies found that among homicides, 84% of the firearms used are unregistered and 74.9% are illegal guns smuggled into Canada. Recently, Canada's National Weapons Enforcement Support Team reported that 94% of crime guns were illegally imported into Canada. The vast majority of firearms used in crime are never recovered and many recovered guns cannot be identified as the serial numbers are removed.

**Myth #7: The information on the registry database is secure and cannot be accessed by the criminal element.**

**False:** There were 306 illegal breaches of the national police database documented between 1995 and 2003, 121 of which are still unsolved. Many police investigators have publicly voiced their concerns that the gun registry's security has been breached and become a "shopping list" for thieves.

**Myth #8: The money has already been spent to set up the registry. It is foolish to dismantle it now.**

**False:** The gun registry is by no means complete. Only 7 million of the estimated 15 million guns that are in Canada (according to government import and export records) are registered. More than 300,000 owners of previously registered handguns still don't have a firearms licence and more than 400,000 firearm licence holders still haven't registered a gun. There were more than 500,000 handguns lost between the old and new Registries (Canadian Firearms Registry). Based upon precedent, it will cost another billion dollars (+) to complete the registry.

**Myth #9: Rifles and shotguns are the weapon of choice for criminals and are the most used firearms in crime.**

**False:** Where firearms were used in a violent crime, 71.2% involved handguns (it is estimated that over 1/3 involve replicas or air guns), only 9% involved rifles or shotguns (of which only 2.1% were registered) and 6.5% involved sawed-off rifles or shotguns (already prohibited).

**Myth #10: The tragic murders of RCMP officers at the hands of criminals with rifles proves the need for the long gun registry.**

**False:** The registry's monumental failure to prevent the tragic deaths of these police officers underscores the folly of registering the firearms of the law abiding. All the criminals who committed these crimes were in illegal possession of unregistered guns, despite the presence of the registry. These events prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the ineffective uselessness of the long gun registry in protecting our society.

## MYTHS BUSTED!

**Support Bill C-21. End the waste!**

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