

Canada

Data Source: Firearms Tracing System

January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2019
(As of March 10, 2020)

Office of Strategic Intelligence and Information



U.S. Department of Justice

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

ATF Firearms Trace Data Disclaimer

- Firearm traces are designed to assist law enforcement authorities in conducting investigations by tracking the sale and possession of specific firearms. Law enforcement agencies may request firearms traces for any reason, and those reasons are not necessarily reported to the Federal Government. Not all firearms used in crime are traced and not all firearms traced are used in crime.
- Firearms selected for tracing are not chosen for purposes of determining which types, makes or models of firearms are used for illicit purposes. The firearms selected do not constitute a random sample and should not be considered representative of the larger universe of all firearms used by criminals, or any subset of that universe. Firearms are normally traced to the first retail seller, and sources reported for firearms traced do not necessarily represent the sources or methods by which firearms in general are acquired for use in crime.



Introduction

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) National Tracing Center (NTC) is the nation's only crime gun tracing facility. As such, the NTC provides critical information that helps domestic and international law enforcement agencies solve firearms crimes, detect firearms trafficking and identify trends with respect to intrastate, interstate and international movement of crime guns. For calendar year (CY) 2014, the NTC traced more than 351,000 firearms; for CY 2015, more than 364,000 firearms; for CY 2016, more than 364,000 firearms; for CY 2017, more than 400,000 firearms; for CY 2018, more than 425,000 firearms; and for CY 2019, more than 438,000 firearms. Over this time period, the NTC has traced firearms for the United States and 138 other countries, including Canada.

Firearms tracing is the systematic tracking of the movement of a firearm from its first sale by a manufacturer or importer through the distribution chain in an attempt to identify the first retail purchaser, in order to provide investigative leads for criminal investigations.

Introduction (Cont'd)

After the firearm is recovered and the identifiers are forwarded to the NTC, ATF contacts the manufacturer or importer to ascertain the sale or transfer of the firearm. ATF will attempt to contact all ensuing Federal Firearms Licensees (wholesale/retail) in the distribution chain until a purchaser is identified or the trace process cannot continue due to a lack of accurate or complete information on the trace request or in the Federal Firearms Licensee's records. The success of a trace result, whether domestic or international, relies upon the accuracy of the supplied firearm identifiers. The necessary identifiers for a trace include manufacturer, importer (if applicable), model, caliber and serial number.

This report relates only to those firearms recovered in Canada and traced by ATF. The firearm trace results are based upon the supplied firearm identifiers on the Canada trace requests. The Canadian trace data in this report is organized by the calendar year in which the firearm was recovered, not the year in which the trace was initiated.

Introduction (Cont'd)

For example, if a firearm was recovered in 2019 but the trace was not initiated until 2020, the data will be organized in the year of recovery, 2019. Organization by recovery date provides valuable investigative leads as well as more specific trend data. Therefore, using this example, if a firearm for which a trace is initiated in later years is determined to have been recovered in 2019, the raw trace numbers for 2019 will increase in subsequent trace data reports. As a result, the trace numbers for each calendar year may fluctuate, necessitating changes to prior years' trace numbers in future reports. If a recovery date is not provided for a firearm, trace data for that firearm is organized by the calendar year in which the trace was entered into the Firearms Tracing System by ATF.



Canada has had full registration for all handguns since 1935. On April 6, 2012, the long gun registry was officially abolished, thereby no longer requiring the registration of rifles or shotguns. Canadian law classifies numerous firearms as prohibited (i.e., shorter barreled semi-automatic pistols, fully automatic firearms and short barreled rifles and short barreled shotguns). Canada only submits trace requests to ATF of recovered firearms that are not registered or prohibited.

Analytical Criteria Used to Compile the Canada Trace Statistics

All of the attached trace statistics had the following selection criteria in common:

- Traces with a recovery country of Canada were included.
- Traces with a recovery date between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2019 were included.
 - If a recovery date was not provided, traces with an entered date between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2019 were included.
 - In CY 2014 through CY 2019, 98.7% of all Canada traces listed a recovery date.
- Duplicate traces were not included. A duplicate is a trace request for the same recovery of a firearm that was previously traced.
- All traces may not have been submitted or completed at the time of this analysis.
- Statistics are based on a query of the Firearms Tracing System on March 10, 2020.

Firearms Recovered in Canada and Submitted to ATF for Tracing

Calendar Year	CY 2014			CY 2015			CY 2016			CY 2017			CY 2018			CY 2019		
	# of Traces	% of all Traces	% by Category	# of Traces	% of all Traces	% by Category	# of Traces	% of all Traces	% by Category	# of Traces	% of all Traces	% by Category	# of Traces	% of all Traces	% by Category	# of Traces	% of all Traces	% by Category
Category – U.S. Sourced Firearms																		
Manufactured in the United States	1,094	73.9		1,116	70.9		1,206	68.0		2,022	71.5		1,363	65.0		1,537	67.1	
Imported into the United States	375	25.3	99.2	430	27.3	98.2	509	28.7	96.7	753	26.6	98.1	677	32.3	97.3	705	30.8	97.9
Subtotal	1,469			1,546			1,715			2,775			2,040			2,242		
Category – Undetermined Source Country for Firearms																		
Non-U.S. Manufacturer	10	0.7		25	1.6		43	2.4		51	1.8		41	2.0		44	1.9	
Undetermined Country of Origin	2	0.1	0.8	3	0.2	1.8	15	0.9	3.3	2	0.1	1.9	16	0.7	2.7	5	0.2	2.1
Subtotal	12			28			58			53			57			49		
Total	1,481	100	100	1,574	100	100	1,773	100	100	2,828	100	100	2,097	100	100	2,291	100	100

This chart is based upon firearms recovered in Canada in a particular year and submitted to ATF for tracing.

Firearms Recovered in Canada and Submitted to ATF for Tracing

The category "U.S. Sourced Firearms" refers to those firearms that were determined by ATF to be manufactured in the U.S. or legally imported into the U.S. by a Federal firearms licensee.

"Manufactured in the United States" refers to those firearms that were determined by ATF to be manufactured in the U.S. by a Federal firearms licensee (manufacturer).

"Imported into the United States" refers to those firearms that were determined by ATF to be legally imported into the U.S. by a Federal firearms licensee (importer). Foreign manufactured firearms that are legally imported into the U.S. require that the importer name be stamped (impressed) on the firearm (27 C.F.R. Section 478.92). The firearm is traced by ATF through the U.S.-based importer, not the foreign manufacturer.

The category "Undetermined Source Country for Firearms" refers to those firearms in which the trace request did not provide sufficient information in order for ATF to determine a source country.

Firearms Recovered in Canada and Submitted to ATF for Tracing

"Non-U.S. Manufacturer" refers to those firearms in which the trace request indicated a non-U.S. (foreign) manufacturer and a U.S. firearms importer was either not listed (possible omission of the trace requestor) or not required (a foreign manufactured firearm that never legally entered U.S. commerce and therefore would not bear the identifying stamp of a U.S. firearms importer). ATF is unable to determine if these non-U.S. (foreign) manufactured firearms were imported directly into Canada, or if the firearms were legally imported into the U.S. or went to another country and then made their way to Canada by legal or illegal means.

"Undetermined Country of Origin" refers to those firearms in which the trace request was unclear as to the manufacturer, country of origin and the importer. ATF is unable to determine the firearm's manufacturer, or if the firearms were imported directly into Canada, or if the firearms were legally imported into the U.S. or went to another country and then made their way to Canada by legal or illegal means.

"Total" refers to all firearms recovered in Canada in a particular calendar year and submitted to ATF for tracing.

U.S. Sourced Firearms Recovered in Canada and Submitted to ATF for Tracing

Calendar Year	CY 2014		CY 2015		CY 2016		CY 2017		CY 2018		CY 2019	
	# of Traces	% of U.S. Sourced Traces	# of Traces	% of U.S. Sourced Traces	# of Traces	% of U.S. Sourced Traces	# of Traces	% of U.S. Sourced Traces	# of Traces	% of U.S. Sourced Traces	# of Traces	% of U.S. Sourced Traces
Category - U.S. Sourced Firearms												
Traced to a Retail Purchaser	649	44.2	645	41.7	729	42.5	738	26.6	919	45.1	968	43.2
Traced to a Foreign Country	450	30.6	463	30.0	566	33.0	1,572	56.6	721	35.3	673	30.0
Unable to Determine a Purchaser	370	25.2	438	28.3	420	24.5	465	16.8	400	19.6	601	26.8
Total	1,469	100	1,546	100	1,715	100	2,775	100	2,040	100	2,242	100

This chart is based upon the **U.S. sourced firearms** from the page entitled "Firearms Recovered in Canada and Submitted to ATF for Tracing". The total does not include trace numbers from the category "Undetermined Source Country for Firearms".

U.S. Sourced Firearms Recovered in Canada and Submitted to ATF for Tracing

The category "U.S. Sourced Firearms" refers to those firearms that were determined by ATF to be manufactured in the U.S. or legally imported into the U.S. by a Federal firearms licensee.

"Traced to a Retail Purchaser" refers to those traces in which ATF could determine the first retail purchaser, that is, a sale executed on an ATF Firearms Transaction Record (ATF Form 4473) from a U.S. Federal firearms licensee to a purchaser in the U.S. (As a comparison, for firearms recovered in the U.S. and traced to a retail purchaser, the average percentage for firearms traced for the time period CY 2014 - CY 2019 is approximately 73%.)



"Traced to a Foreign Country" refers to those firearms that were determined by ATF to be transferred from a U.S. Federal firearms licensee to a foreign government, law enforcement, dealer or entity.

U.S. Sourced Firearms Recovered in Canada and Submitted to ATF for Tracing

"Unable to Determine a Purchaser" refers to those firearms that were manufactured in / imported into the U.S. but ATF was unable to determine the first retail purchaser through the trace process.

Common reasons ATF is unable to identify a purchaser:

- Incomplete firearms identifying data on the trace request form
- Incomplete or never received out-of-business Federal firearms licensee records (upon discontinuance of business by a Federal firearms licensee, the records shall be delivered within 30 days to ATF or other Attorney General stipulated location (Title 18 U.S.C. 923(g)(4))
- Altered or obliterated firearm serial numbers
- The firearm is considered to be too old to trace
- Current Federal firearms licensee records are incomplete or missing, or the Federal firearms licensee was unresponsive to ATF's request for trace information

Types of Firearms Recovered in Canada and Submitted to ATF for Tracing

Calendar Year	CY 2014		CY 2015		CY 2016		CY 2017		CY 2018		CY 2019	
	# of Traces	% of all Traces	# of Traces	% of all Traces	# of Traces	% of all Traces	# of Traces	% of all Traces	# of Traces	% of all Traces	# of Traces	% of all Traces
Category – Types of Firearms												
Pistols	578	39.0	657	41.7	759	42.8	752	26.6	995	47.5	1,062	46.4
Revolvers	212	14.3	253	16.1	234	13.2	213	7.5	163	7.8	168	7.3
Rifles	392	26.5	403	25.6	475	26.8	1,213	42.9	544	25.9	516	22.5
Shotguns	272	18.4	241	15.3	285	16.1	630	22.3	367	17.5	368	16.1
Other	27	1.8	20	1.3	20	1.1	20	0.7	28	1.3	177	7.7
Total	1,481	100	1,574	100	1,773	100	2,828	100	2,097	100	2,291	100

This chart is based upon firearms recovered in Canada in a particular year and submitted to ATF for tracing.

Types of Firearms Recovered in Canada and Submitted to ATF for Tracing

The "Other" category refers to machineguns, destructive devices, derringers, tear gas launchers, combination guns, flare guns, receivers/frames, silencers, any other weapons and unknown types (to include trace requests that do not annotate a firearm type).